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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE BROTHERS.]

DARCY'S CHILD;

OR,
THE DUKE'S CHOICE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sybil's Inheritance," "Evelyn's Plot," &c., &c.

CHAPTER III.

The vanquished now leaves his broken bands,
And hides his miseries in distant lands.

MARCUS DARCY had sped on his wild course on that wretched night with but two all-engrossing ideas fevering his brain, and urging his footsteps well nigh to a frenzied and unnatural bound.

He must call in the necessary myrmidons of those who affect the solemn pomp of woe to do the requisite honour to his deceased wife.

Then—then he would lie down and die.

"For what should I cumber this earth? Why should I live?" he kept repeating fiercely as he rushed on.

As the woman of old said in her bitterness, so spake the stricken man. He, too, would curse his Maker and die.

The wind was howling over the fells and through the gorges of the mountain pass; the beams of the rising sun were already colouring the horizon with their crimson and gold rays.

But through the shrill whistle of the one came a yet more distinct and clear childish wail.

Rising from the ground, and mingling as it were with the Heaven-born beams of the morn, was the lurid light of an earth-created conflagration, so intense that it resembled the glowing tints of the skies.

Marcus stopped and listened.

Again came that plaintive cry—a cry none other than which, perhaps, would at that moment have arrested the purpose of the frenzied man.

It was one which would have touched to the quick his lost Blanche—one which would have appealed to him with irresistible force from the lips of his now dead infant—a helpless pleading of the weakest and the most sacred of Heaven's creatures.

Marcus, after a moment's pause, sprang on in the direction whence it came, guided by the frequent but ever-weakening sound that came from time to time on his ear, till he reached the gorge of the mountain, which was echoing it as if to strengthen its prayer for aid.

The light was still dim, but by its gradually brightening gray Marcus could discern the small figure of something, which he at once perceived was the child from whom the touching plaint proceeded, and his speed increased at the sight of the agony which the little creature's whole attitude bespoke. In an instant he stood by its side, and raised the half-clinging, half-terrified form of the little girl in his arms and folded its shivering limbs to his heart.

"My poor child, what is it? How came you here?" he said, gazing down on the baby face, which looked up at him with strange, bewildered, yet most beautiful and deeply blue eyes, that already seemed to speak the thoughts of the infantile brain.

"Papa, papa! I want papa," mourned the girl, hiding her head in his bosom as if to persuade herself into the delusion that he was the father on whom she called.

"Where is he? Who brought you here?" he said, remarking for the first time that the child was clad only in a thin white garment, and that its little feet were only defended from the damp grass by small woollen socks.

"I don't know—I don't know," was the lisping reply. "Take Minette to papa."

Marcus could perceive by the ague-like shiver and the drooping head of the little foundling that even minutes were precious if he wished to save her life, and he did not harass her failing strength with more questioning. He opened his own large but threadbare coat and sheltered her between it and his heart, which for the instant forgot its load of misery in the helpless infant's woes, and he hastened on towards the town in which he might expect to find all that could meet the necessities of either sufferer.

The last honours for his idolised wife, food and clothes for the starved child could be procured,

albeit Blanche could not be restored to him, and the deserted little one might never be claimed by the parent she had lost.

There was an excited air among the denizens of the streets, which would have been usually deserted at that hour, and it struck even the preoccupied Marcus with surprise.

"What has happened?" he asked as he passed a little crowd of gaping idlers, who were gathered at a corner of one of the highest eminences of the market-place.

The blunt north-countryman looked at him with profound contempt.

"You must be blind, man, if you haven't seen the red glare in the sky. Darcy Grange is burned down, that's all, and every one in it, so the tale goes."

Marcus staggered, and the light burden he carried well nigh escaped his grasp.

"It is false—false!" he said, at last. "Why, I left it not four hours since."

The man stared suspiciously.

"I'll give you a bit of advice, stranger. Don't talk too freely about that, for it's said that there's been foul play in the matter. Sir Robert and his child, and most if not all of the servants were burned alive, and it's not likely there'd have been no escape if it hadn't been fired in more than one place. That's spoken of already, and any one might get into a scrape that could be proved to have been near the place. There, don't look so black. It's no business of mine, for I never set eyes on the baronet or the building in my life. But it's reason, and that's what a north-erner goes by."

Marcus did not reply.

He was too stunned to even bestow a thought on his own danger, or his own actions or words.

His brother dead! The child for whom he had hardened himself against the common humanities of kindred sleeping and smouldering with him in the hot ashes of their ancestral home! It was too fearful for one selfish thought to mingle with its horror.

"Heaven forgive me, for I cursed him well nigh with my last words, and surely it will be visited on

my own head!" he groaned as he went mechanically on.

And as he sternly mastered the outward exhibition of feeling, and proceeded to give the necessary directions for his wife's obsequies, and for the nourishment and clothing of his newly found treasure, still one miserable image haunted his every step, darkened like a shadow every object on which his eyes rested.

It was the image of his brother, the first-born of his mother, the heir of their house, looking with reproachful agony on him who had invoked vengeance on him and his.

Would not that vengeance return tenfold on his own head?

A week had passed.

The body of the eighth baronet of the line of Darcy had been consigned with pomp and circumstance to the vault of his fathers, amidst the awed whispers and grave looks, if not the heartfelt grief, of the tenants and dependents of the house.

Now another and more simple but more touching funeral took its way to that beautiful, lone churchyard, and the white ribbons and silk that read his mingled with the sable pall and plumes told that the infant and the wife of that stern, tearless mourner were to be laid in the open grave.

Rigid as stone and apparently as impenetrable, Marcus Darcy saw all that he loved in this world hidden from his sight.

Fierce and haughty as the proudest of his line, he turned from curious eyes, and took his way from the scene by the nearest gate of the well-known spot, and hid himself amidst the trees of the neighbouring wood that skirted the Darcy estate.

Then, and not till then, did the frozen sluices give way beneath the pent fire of his agony, and he cast himself on the ground and wept with the convulsive spasms that shake the strong man to the very centre.

There was a stealthy step near him, that came creeping amidst the crackling leaves, and a cold, snake-like look riveted on him that read his every gesture, drank in, as it were, every tear, till at length the measure appeared full, and the intruder spoke:

"Marcus, I am glad to meet you here, and alone."

The mourner bounded to his feet, and stood before the speaker with pride and contempt drying up every softer emotion.

"The pleasure is not mutual. Sir Ralph Darcy, I must decline any communication with my father's son, since he is a reproach to his name."

And, with a haughty inclination of the head, he was about to leave the spot, when Ralph laid his hand firmly on his arm.

"Marcus, this is madness, and worse. I must speak to you, unless you would hear in the face of the world the imputation that rests on you, unless you would stand at the felon's dock a murderer and a traitor!"

Marcus turned lividly pale.

Again the words of the curse he had uttered sounded in his ears.

Were they to be already visited on him?

"Ah, I see my words can touch even your proud, abandoned nature," resumed Ralph. "Be advised, Marcus, and listen to me with as much patience as you may. Remember, it is for the sake of the name we both bear that I have come here to warn you. Come this way, that we may be sure of not being overheard, for it is a frightful crime with which you stand charged, and its very whisper should make any one with human feelings crouch to the very earth with shame."

"It is false—false as your own nature, Ralph. It is you who have invented the very idea," burst out Marcus, passionately. "Robert's death was as great a surprise, as terrible a blow to me, as to yourself—ay, and perhaps more so," he added, with a stern, sharp glance which made Ralph's eyes lower for a brief instant.

"Denial is easy to a man who could be guilty of such a foul crime, Marcus. But unluckily the proofs are but too strong. Listen, Marcus. You are known to have visited Robert, as it seemed, in secret—to have threatened vengeance because he would not supply your extravagance. Ere many hours the house was on fire in more than one place. The child and its nurse were in apartments immediately over the commencement of the conflagration. The nurse and Perkins escaped as by a miracle, but the heiress—the only child of the man you thus threatened—perished, and Robert—hark ye, Marcus—Robert was discovered in the library where you had left him, with the wound of a deadly weapon on his head, and your own sword-stick, with the crest of our house—a remnant, I presume, of your earlier days—lying on the floor."

Marcus staggered a few paces as the hideous tale was slowly poured into his ears. There was such

identity in the deed with the feelings that had fired his nature that for a moment he could realise the possibility that he might have been its perpetrator.

"Ha! you are stung, I see. You thought all traces of your crime would be reduced to ashes under the ruins of our birthplace. But, as it chanced, the fire did not spread to that part of the building with such violence as to entirely consume it. Robert's corpse was found, untouched by the flames, and in the condition that I describe. Now, what think you, murderer of your mother's son?"

"I am no murderer, Ralph Darcy. My hands are clean as your own; my heart, maybe, far purer than your dark, cold nature," replied Marcus, firmly. "And you know it, in your inmost soul, even as you stand there with the foul lie and slander on your lips."

"Better spare such aggravating terms, Marcus, since, with all my honest desire to avoid the scandal on our name, I may lose patience and leave you to your fate. I have no reason to accuse you falsely. All is mine, by poor Robert's death. And, as to lies, it is not I who could invent what happened when I was two hundred miles from the spot. All had been discovered long ere I arrived to hear and to test the truth of the horrid tale. If there is falsehood it is not in me."

Marcus was silent for a few minutes. His brain had lost its clear perceptions, his haughty spirit had been daunted by his bewildering trials, and, for the time, he sank crushed and mute under his brother's stern sophistry.

"There is falsehood, black as you cloud, Ralph Darcy," he returned, at length. "And, though it may be as impervious to the truth as this forest is to Heaven's light, it will be revealed in time, to the shame and punishment of its authors. I declare before my Maker that I am guiltless, and, if you are equally so, the real criminal has yet to be discovered and brought to the justice which awaits him."

Ralph laughed scornfully.

"No doubt, no doubt. But it rests with my own pleasure, Master Marcus, whether it ever reaches him. If you please, my pugnacious brother, we will leave all high-flown professions and arguments, and come to plain matter-of-fact. In few words, I can prove you to be guilty of well-nigh the most atrocious crime that can disgrace human nature, and, unless you submit to my terms, you shall find no mercy at my hands; not one relenting pang should move me, even at your scaffold."

"Not even to your mother's son, bad man?" returned Marcus, sternly. "It is worthy of you."

"You showed none to her first-born," retorted Ralph. "If I give you one chance of escape, it is but for the sake of the long line who have transmitted to us a spotless name. Listen, Marcus. I am now the head of our house. Its estates are mine, its ancient title is mine. But it may be that I may require more entire control over all than I can exercise while you are the next heir. Renounce all in my favour; go hence, never to assert your rights or to proclaim to the world your very existence; and so long as you remain thus dead to me and the world you shall escape the disgraceful death which you deserve."

"And yield my birth-right, confess tacitly a crime I have never committed, sacrifice the name I glory in, which is all that is left to me! Ralph, you are worse than Judas himself!"

"It is your character, not mine, that is in question just now, Marcus. Time is passing—do not let the chance I give you slip, or it shall never be repeated—never, were you to implore it on your knees."

"Why should I? What use is life to me now?" groaned the wretched man. "Better death at once than such degradation and bondage."

"And shame resting for ever on your head, men execrating your name whenever it is known, your last breath drawn amidst the howlings and groans of an indignant mob—is that 'better,' Marcus? Think again ere it is too late."

The tones came like a fiend's mocking accents on the doomed one's ears. The images it conjured up danced like hideous phantoms before his eyes.

He closed the lids tightly over them with his fingers.

Had he courage to dare such horrors?

The shudder that convulsed his frame at the bare imaginings might perhaps be stilled by a strong will, the stainless hands might be held up in fearless appeal for justice.

Then a sweeter, gentler voice sounded like music in the dead still of that pause, and a lovely cherub face chased away those grinning phantoms.

Blanche had said:

"Live for my sake."

And that helpless child, whom Heaven seemed to have committed to him as a new tie, a new hope on the desolate earth, called on him for protection and for self-sacrifice.

It was a moment on which the destinies of many

hung, but at length it flew by on the sure wings of time, and the die was cast.

He raised his head, and even Ralph was struck by the new dignity and composure that had succeeded to the wild agony the noble features had but now worn.

"Ralph Darcy, I will accept your terms, but from motives that you can as little comprehend as you can feel generosity or remorse in your hard heart. But, remember, I am not deceived. You know the truth—ay, and it will stick like an arrow in your conscience till you are on your death-bed, haunt you till your last gasping breath."

Ralph gave a quick, questioning glance, then he turned away for an instant.

Was it a vague threat? or did his brother hold one clue, one thread to the tangled web that was weaving round him?

It was too late to doubt or hesitate now, and he returned to the spot with a cool indifference that well veiled his eager anxieties.

"It is well, Marcus. You have shown more sense than you have yet displayed in your mad career. I am glad on every account that I am able to spare one so near me in blood. Now you will swear to me that you will observe your promise, disappear as entirely as if the grave were closed over you from every one who could recognise you, abstain from direct or indirect attempts to enforce one right, either during my life or after my death, on pain of the penalties which it will be in my power to inflict at any hour. Will you do this?"

"What security do you give that you will observe your part of the compact?" asked Marcus, a cold thrill running through his veins at this kind of living death inflicted on him.

"The very surest—my own interests and convenience. So long as you do not cross my path, or interfere with me and mine, you are welcome to drag on your miserable existence till doomsday. I shall be in no hurry to ascertain your fate, I promise you, unless you are rash enough to form it on me. Now, swear!"

The words were slowly dictated, and as slowly repeated.

The solemn oath was taken in the silence of that dark, lonely wood, with but the Omnipotent as its witness. Then the two separated, not to meet again for many long years, perhaps never on this side of eternity.

CHAPTER IV.

The heavily toy so fiercely sought
His lost charms by being caught.
A life of pain, the loss of peace,
From infant's play and man's caprice.

"PRAY, countess, how large a party have you contrived to pack in this Noah's ark of yours?" asked Lady Groville of the fair mistress of Mont Aspen Court as she established herself in her dressing-room some half-hour after her arrival at the hospitable mansion.

"Really, Ida, you are very inquisitive, and extremely perplexing," answered the Countess of Mont Aspen, laughing. "In the first place I am frightfully deficient in arithmetic, and only know that my old housekeeper is driven to frenzy by having to pack half as many again as the rooms are supposed to hold. And next, I cannot tell whom Bertram has invited to these everlasting battues, which are enough to turn any reasonable woman's head."

"Thank the fates, I am an ambassador's wife, and have no such exasperating nuisances," laughed Lady Groville. "But, Constance, remember I have been away for five years and have only just returned on furlough. Just imagine what a confusion my poor brain must be in, with only the little fragments and rumours of news that reach one at our little Brussels. Give me some landmarks in the sea which is about to surround me. Who is coming, or who is come, that I ought to know something about? One might abuse a man's first cousin to his very face unless there is a glimmering of light in the fog."

The countess laughed.

"Ah, Ida, I see you are still untamed. Those pretty little arrows wing as sharply as ever from your lips as when you were the belle and terror of the season. However, you are a dear little creature at heart, nevertheless, and I will try to keep you from being poisoned, or Sir Henry from a duel from some mad à propos witticism of yours. Where shall I begin?"

"At the most interesting and the newest of your guests. Depend upon it, the others will find safety in insignificance," returned the incorrigible little ambassadress.

"Then I shall have a very brief task. Three parts of one's friends are so hopelessly commonplace," said the countess, sipping the fragrant tea which was standing on a silver salver by her. "Do you remember the Darcy tragedy, Ida?"

"Humph! let me see, that was when we were in the unknown regions of the school-room, was it not?" asked the lady. "I have some glimmering of hearing Mademoiselle Dupré crying with Therese, the 'young lady's-maid,' about some unlucky child that was burned to death. Wasn't that so exquisitely French? I remember, it quite struck my girlish fancy at the time, and set me off in a most unfeeling fit of laughing."

"Well, Miss Darcy is to be the belle and *débutante* of our party," returned Lady Mont Aspen, calmly.

"Good Heavens! Constance, not the burnt ashes, reanimated, I hope; or was it a *conte* of mademoiselle's?" exclaimed Lady Greville, in feigned terror.

"Not at all. It is the cousin of the ill-fated little mortal over whom the tears were shed that moved you so wickedly," replied the countess. "Sir Ralph married within a very few months of the said fire which destroyed the then baronet and his only child, and had, in his turn, one daughter, after whose birth Lady Darcy fell into delicate health, and has been a complete recluse and cypher ever since."

"Then I suppose the girl is chaperoned by her father. She is not a charge of yours, is she, Constance?" said Lady Greville, shrugging her shoulders.

"No, Sir Ralph is here also. But the especial chaperone of the young damsel is Lady Beatrice Thornhill, who is some incomprehensible relation, it seems, of the Darcys, and takes the place of the mistress, both at home and abroad. An imperious one too, I should fancy, far more able to cope with Sir Ralph than the poor, feeble invalid."

"What is the girl like? Is she pretty?" asked Lady Greville.

"Yes; but she has not even been presented yet. She is scarcely sixteen, but I suppose her father is in a hurry to get his heiress fairly out and established."

"Then you have seen her?"

"Only once at an archery *site*, where she was frightened to death, I fancied. And Lady Beatrice is such a haughty, handsome, Norma-looking woman, that poor little Geraldine looked like a snowdrop by her side."

"Humph! I have no fancy for snowdrops," returned Lady Greville. "But is she really a great heiress, Constance?"

"Decidedly. Far greater than her little cousin would have been, for Sir Ralph has managed in some way or other to get the entail cut off, and Geraldine is the heiress of all the property, real and personal, as the lawyers say, though there never was a female baronet of course."

"Perhaps he means the title to be revived in his son-in-law," observed Lady Greville.

"I scarcely think it. My own idea is that he has already fixed on his daughter's *future*," returned the countess. "That is my next celebrity, Ida. The young Duke of St. Maur, the catch and the male debutant of the year."

"What is he like?"

"Like! Why, the young ladies would describe him to you as a 'perfect love,' and the mammas as an eligible. I think him an eccentricity."

"How? I like something out of the usual style."

"How? Well, he is not handsome, but he has a wonderfully intellectual face, and a splendid figure. He is rich and his own master, and, *par consequence*, rather haughty and reserved; but he neither flirts, nor is he at all vain. And I have heard some stories of him which speak of a generous though an eccentric nature."

"Then I shall decidedly take him up and flirt *ad libitum*," returned the little ambassador, glancing at herself in the glass. "I am not quite *passé* yet, am I, Constance?"

"You are very well preserved, Ida, and really in England we do not call thirty-two so extremely old," answered Lady Mont Aspen, rising. "There, just give a glance in the mirror, and you will see a pair of flashing eyes and a faultless complexion and contour. That is where you brunettes have the advantage, *ma diplomate*. But as you cannot catch his young grace you should, in common fairness, leave a chance to the pretty Geraldine."

"Not a whit. I feel a kind of chivalrous sympathy with the ashes of the unlucky *petite*—I suppose in restitution for my cruelty when she was broiled in terrible fashion. Unless I take a sudden fancy to the milk-and-water damsel, I certainly shall step in to the rescue of the victim. *Adieu*, Constance. I mean to be killing this evening. I need time for consideration. At eighteen one might venture on a plunge; at thirty-two it might entail shipwreck on one's hopes."

Lady Mont Aspen shook her head at the gay little coquette, and left the room to prepare for her own more onerous duties as hostess of the formidable throng.

"Lady Mont Aspen, I believe you have seen my young charge—Miss Geraldine Darcy?" said Lady

Beatrice Thornhill, approaching the countess, with the slight figure of Sir Ralph's heiress in her stately wake.

The countess looked kindly on the timid, half-child creature that stood shrinking unconsciously behind her chaperone, and she confessed there was beauty, if of an insipid and meaningless kind, in that young face. Hair of an almost yellow hue, but soft and abundant as a child's; eyes that were large and well opened, but with a half-startled timidity in their light blue depths; a skin utterly spotless in its snowy tint, and only warmed by the very softest of rose-blush bloom, accorded with small and infantile features, and formed a real if not high or exalted order of loveliness.

No one with feminine sympathies could gaze on the soft outlines and the unobtrusive grace of the youthful heiress without a gush of protecting kindness.

"Yes, Lady Beatrice, I had that pleasure once, and it is one that I have not forgotten," she said, taking the girl's hand in hers. "I am very glad that Sir Ralph distinguishes me by allowing Miss Darcy to make her first acquaintance with the world at Mont Aspen."

Geraldine's fingers involuntarily closed on those of her kind hostess, and Lady Mont Aspen was touched with the naive compliment.

"There, I shall take our little rosebud under my own especial patronage and shelter while in my house, Lady Beatrice. Depend upon it, I will not discredit the trust. Let me see. Where shall I find her a safe escort for the formidable ordeal of dinner? Oh, duke, may I depend on you for taking care of this little pearl? She is just emerging from her shell, and needs tender treatment, you must understand."

The young man thus addressed justified the description of him given by his hostess to her friend.

His figure was tall, and well proportioned enough to cover the sins of a much plainer face than he possessed, even if a strawberry-leaved coronet and an ample rent-roll had not thrown a yet more effectual veil over any defects.

But his rich hair, of a nut-brown hue, his dark gray eyes, which were deepened in tint by long lashes of a yet darker shade than his clustering curls, and the fine brow, which was yet not of any unnatural height, were enough to redeem the irregularity of his other features, and few could have seen that face without bestowing a second and more inquiring glance on its expressive nobleness.

He gave one sharp but scarcely perceptible survey of Geraldine's young face ere he replied:

"You are too flattering, countess. All I can promise is that your *protégée* shall not be tormented, either by myself or any one else. May I ask for a proper introduction, before we embark on the risky voyage to the dining-room?"

Lady Mont Aspen shook her head archly.

"If you do not mind you will terrify your shrinking violet, duke. Miss Darcy, my love, be bold enough to keep his eccentric grace in check. The Duke of St. Maur is really a very harmless personage, or I would not put you in his keeping, even for an hour or two."

Geraldine gave one shy glance from under her downcast lids, and her eyes met the grave but clear ones of her new acquaintance.

"I am not a hyena, Miss Darcy; and I will keep guard against any other wild animals," he said, with one of his rare smiles. "Pray do not be led away by those alarming hints of Lady Mont Aspen."

Geraldine actually returned the smile, and there was an infantile sweetness in her innocent look which brought a yet softer expression to the lips of her escort as he gave her his arm, and prepared to follow in the train that were proceeding to the banqueting-saloon.

"Is this really your first dinner in public, Miss Darcy?" he asked as they took their places.

"My very first," she said, in tones that were infantile in their clear softness. "I feel sadly foolish and frightened."

"But I assure you it is quite unnecessary," he replied, coolly. "Men and women are very much alike everywhere, and I believe you will find very little difference between your governess and a great lady. As to our sex, we are accustomed to be extremely alarmed at your power," he added, smiling.

Geraldine laughed.

"Imagine any one being afraid of poor little me," she said. "Your grace is only quizzing me I fear, though you did promise to be so good."

"Indeed—indeed I will keep my word," he said, earnestly. "But what I did mean was simply that we are all such commonplace, ordinary individuals at heart that any alarm is sadly wasted. If you will but get this once established in your mind, you have no idea what a great deal of distress it will spare you."

"But it is all so strange and so bewildering. I actually do not know what is right to do or say. I am sure I shall make some dreadful mistakes," she said, with a bewitching air of confiding yet shy simplicity. "Lady Beatrice will be so angry."

"I should scarcely have believed any one could be 'so angry' with you," said the duke, glancing at the gentle young face. "But suppose we conclude an alliance for the time being," he added, sportively, "and I will engage to protect you against all monsters real or imaginary while you are here. First from the monster Famine. Let me help you to some of this *vol à vent*."

The young man was amply rewarded by the bright gratitude of the girl's look as she accepted his attention, and his own manner perhaps unconsciously assumed a more tender and *empressé* air than he intended to convey.

"You have scarcely emerged from the schoolroom, I suppose," he resumed, after a slight pause.

"I am not fully emancipated even now," she replied. "My governess is still in attendance, and those dreadful masters are incessantly worrying me lest 'Miss Darcy should disgrace them when she comes out.'"

"Are you very hard-hearted on the occasion?" he asked, laughing.

"What can I do?" she replied, simply. "I am not clever and I cannot help it, and mamma is the only one who understands it, because she says she never could learn all those languages and music and all those endless performances. She was more fortunate than I am, for her father did not mind, though he was very, very learned himself."

"Sir Ralph does mind, then?" said the duke, amused at the simple confidences.

"Yes, and Lady Beatrice too. They say I am not fit to be the heiress of the Darcys unless I am very accomplished. Oh! I do wish I was not."

"Not what? Not accomplished or not an heiress?" asked the duke, laughing unrestrainedly.

"Not an heiress," she replied, sadly. "If I had but a brother I daresay they would not mind about me. I often envy the very cottage girls about the manor. But it is my own fault for being so stupid, I daresay."

"Your troubles would scarcely find much sympathy with most young ladies," returned the duke, more gravely. "Yet I can understand the unworlship that creates them. May it never be destroyed, Miss Darcy, by the contact with others which will soon banish all your self-distrust. Sir Ralph's heiress will not meet with much trial in society, I can promise. But to dismiss such grave subjects. Tell me, do you ride?"

"Yes, if the horses are not too spirited. I am very fond of it," she replied.

"I have some horses here, one of which is a half-bred Arab, a perfection of gentleness—as much so as yourself," he said, kindly. "If Sir Ralph will consent to your using him while you are here I am sure you will enjoy the riding parties which are always going on. I shall ask him to-night."

"But please do not say I am frightened," she said, in a low tone. "He and Lady Beatrice say it is so silly."

"Trust me. I will take it all on myself," he returned as the ladies rose from the table, inwardly confident that no prudent guardian of a *débutante* would refuse any attention from the Duke of St. Maur, with his princely rent-roll and ancient lineage.

He was strangely fascinated by the young girl. She was so fresh, so utterly unlike any of the conventional young ladies who were trained to win and to receive homage in proper high-bred style.

Was he at last falling in love?

That was a question he did not even trouble to ask himself.

If he could enjoy and confer a brief happiness by this little, harmless flirtation why should he not indulge the impulse?

So argued Clinton St. Maur.

He did not even dream of the engrossing and mad enchantment which he was casting over the young Geraldine Darcy.

It was some hours after midnight, and all the household at Mont Aspen were quietly reposing in their chambers, when the door of one of the suite of apartments appropriated to Sir Ralph Darcy and his companions opened softly, and the baronet stole from it to a chamber at the other end of the little side corridor in which they were situated.

Apparently the inmate of the room expected the visit, for it was at once opened as the faint sound of his fingers on the lock was heard, and in an instant as gently closed after him.

Sir Ralph and Lady Beatrice were alone.

No possibility of intrusion seemed to exist, yet the key was turned, and they placed themselves on chairs so near to each other that they could speak

almost in whispers without a single word being missed by either.

"This is a great risk, Ralph," the lady began, "but as you wished it of course I complied. I presume you have some good reason for exposing yourself and me to very unpleasant consequences?"

"Oh, you need not be afraid. Your age, if not mine, is ample protection," returned Sir Ralph, sarcastically. "No one will suspect any undue attraction from a woman who might be a grandmother, Beatrice. Viola is younger than yourself, and I hope she will enjoy that dignity before she is your age."

"I suppose you mean that the duke's attention to Geraldine implied something. Is that what has kept us both from rest till this hour?" asked Lady Beatrice, bitterly.

"Perhaps in some measure," he responded; "at least, so far as they are connected with yet more urgent matters. Beatrice, do you remember your words on that first night when I told you of my intention to propose to Viola St. Clair?"

"Am I likely to forget? I prophesied what has come to pass, that she would be a useless clog on your actions, while I have been your sole stay and resource. Ralph, when is my patient devotion to be rewarded? It is—it has been an infatuation on my part. Sometimes I feel to hate you, when I think how I have wasted my life in waiting for what may never—never come."

"Well, so far as that goes, I really could not foresee any more than yourself that Viola would linger on in this species of semi-existence. One would have thought that she could not have sustained as many months in her fragile state. But if you are tired, I will not stand between you, Beatrice, and any other promising chance."

A low, sarcastic laugh came on Lady Beatrice's irritated senses like a rasping file.

"Ralph, do not go too far. I am not one to be insulted safely. You know and I know that my position in your house has been too questionable not to prevent any such chance as you taunt me with. But you, at least, need not be baffled by trifles, unless your affection for your wife is too strong to permit any more effectual measures."

"Woman! what would you imply?" asked Sir Ralph, hissing. "Would you have me risk murder?"

"Would it be quite foreign to your race?" she asked, meaningly. "If report speaks true, there was some such deed perpetrated in your own time, Ralph Darcy. In Viola's case there is little need of such violent proceedings; a very little would suffice to hasten the snapping of that feeble thread—ay, and with a clear conscience of any such deadly sin. Ralph, you understand?"

"Perhaps I do—perhaps it is that which has brought me here at this hour," he returned. "Listen, Beatrice, and use your sharp wit, for there are things which are safer to imply than to express. Can you not comprehend that every breath of suspicion must be averted in the event of Lady Darcy's fading away from this troublesome world, more especially as much of her fortune depends on her to bequeath at pleasure?"

The lady bowed her head in assent.

"Very well, then it will need the greatest circumspection on our part, and in a little time you will reap a rich reward for all your long services. When Geraldine is married and Viola has gone to a happier world, then will be the time for enjoyment. Darcy Manor will have a worthy mistress, and who knows but that an heir might yet be born to its heritage? Stranger things have happened, even at your time of life, Beatrice."

There was a crimson flush on the lady's still handsome features, but whether with vexation or exulting hopes even Sir Ralph could not determine.

"How is all this to be managed?" she asked. "I do not see any more chance that Viola will, as you say, depart to a happier state now than there was ten years ago."

Sir Ralph smiled meaningly.

"Beatrice, only play your part well. Act as a tender sister to Viola, a second mother to Geraldine, in the eyes of the little world here, and you shall find that I am not ungrateful. I have already given directions for Lady Darcy to have a change of air by going to the seaside during our absence. Let us see what effect that will have under Marston's excellent management."

"I cannot think why you should keep that woman always about Viola," said Lady Beatrice, impatiently. "She is frightfully insolent to me, and I do believe does a great deal to keep her in this half-alive condition."

"You forget she is an hereditary servant in our family," he returned, calmly. "She was the only one kept by my unfortunate miser brother for Amias, and though she did escape so miraculously in that fire the injuries she received made it but a duty to retain her

in the household. Besides, it silences all scandal for so old and trusty a domestic to be Lady Darcy's attendant."

Lady Beatrice looked keenly at him.

"Ralph, is she your master, or are you hers? I have often surmised that she holds some power over you."

"Wrong again, Beatrice. Marston has no secrets of mine in her power, but there is a moral strength in her very presence that may be wonderfully useful in case of need. And her somewhat brusque manner gives double force to her evidence as to the past."

"I do not understand you," said the lady, doubtfully.

"Then you are less acute than I believed. Marston slept only two chambers off the one where little Amine was at the time of the fire, while Perkins and the other female domestic were in the servants' apartments in the wing which was the only part saved. Do you not perceive that her testimony as to the impossibility of saving the child, even though she attempted her very utmost to get to her, is of immense importance?"

"I do not see how it can affect you, who are said to have been a hundred or more miles away at the time," she retorted.

"Excuse me. When such immense interests are at stake all kinds of reports and suspicions may arise. Amine was at least entitled to the whole of her father and mother's fortune, though it is only by my perseverance that I have got the entail out off. Had there been one possibility of her escaping, it is impossible to say what tales would have been invented. As it is, there is no shadow of a doubt."

"There was no one in the house then—no one near at the time of the fire?"

"Not a living being except Perkins and Marston, and the woman who had but recently been engaged, and she died not very long afterwards; but she was found nearly inseparable from the smoke by Perkins himself; and Marston, as you know, had such severe burns that she is disfigured for life. So if Amine had escaped, it must have been by supernatural agency."

"Well, I cannot see that it signifies. However, it must, I suppose, remain as it is for the present. But when Viola no longer needs her you will pension her off, I must condition. I really could not endure her near me."

"We shall see. Meanwhile I wish you to give every facility to this young duke, and restrain your own haughty temper to Geraldine. Whatever news may come from the manor, preserve the same amiable inaneity, and on no account betray the slightest understanding between us, or seek any private conversation with me. That little Lady Groville has eyes like a hawk. Now, good-night."

He touched her forehead with his lips, but she suddenly sprang up and threw her arms round him.

"Ralph, Ralph," she exclaimed, "I have loved you from my girlish days, as only a strong nature can love. Take heed you do not turn my love to bitterness. I doubt you even yet, but a brief time will test your truth."

He returned her passionate caress with real or affected tenderness, then, holding up his finger in warning, he noiselessly opened the door and passed along the passage to his room.

The door was ajar, and even his resolute nature recoiled as he saw by the subdued light the figure of a man seated quietly by the table, perusing some papers that lay on it.

Another moment and he had recognised the figure and face of one whom he had not seen for many a long year, and, with desperate self-control, he advanced to encounter the unwelcome apparition.

(To be continued.)

INFORMATION has been received in England of the untimely death of M. Sommerer, the constructor of the Mont Cenis tunnel. This eminent engineer was taking a holiday after the completion of his laborious task, when he was seized with illness which in a short time proved fatal.

CAUTION TO BATHERS.—The following notice has just been issued by the secretary of the Humane Society:—"Avoid bathing within two hours after a meal. Avoid bathing when exhausted by fatigue or from any other cause. Avoid bathing when the body is cooling after perspiration; but bathe when the body is warm, provided no time is lost in getting into the water. Avoid chilling the body by sitting or standing naked on the banks or in boats after having been in the water. Avoid remaining too long in the water; leave the water immediately there is the slightest feeling of chilliness. Avoid bathing altogether in the open air if, after having been a short time in the water, there is a sense of chilliness, with numbness of the hands and feet. The vigorous and strong may bathe early in the morning on an empty stomach;

the young, and those who are weak, had better bathe three hours after a meal, the best time for such being from two to three hours after breakfast. Those who are subject to attacks of giddiness and faintness, and those who suffer from palpitation and other sense of discomfort at the heart, should not bathe without first consulting their medical adviser.

SCIENCE.

NEW TESTS FOR PETROLEUM.—Good petroleum should possess the following characteristics: 1. The colour should be white or light yellow with blue reflection; clear yellow indicates imperfect purification, or adulteration with inferior oil. 2. The odour should be faint and not disagreeable. 3. The specific gravity at 60 degrees Fahr. ought not to be below 0.795 nor above 0.804. 4. When mixed with an equal volume of sulphuric acid of the density of 1.53, the colour ought not to become darker, but, on the contrary, lighter. A petroleum that satisfies all of these conditions and possesses the proper flashing point may be set down as a pure and safe article.

SILVERING GLASS.

THE various methods invented by Liebig, Botho, Büttger, and others for depositing silver upon glass have been considerably modified and improved by Krippendorf, in Switzerland, and we give below a condensed statement of the latest improvements introduced by him. The following are the labels required for the materials to be used in silvering glass:

1. Seignette salts; that is, tartrate of soda and potash.
2. Solution of seignette salts in the proportion of one gramme to fifty grammes of distilled water.
3. Caustic ammonia, fifty cubic centimetres.
4. Solution of nitrate of silver, 1.8.
5. A flask of 1,000 cubic centimetres capacity for the reducing liquid.
6. A second flask of same size for the silvering solution.

With the help of the above chemicals and flasks, the two normal solutions, viz.: (1) the reducing liquid, (2) the silvering liquid, can be prepared in the flasks (5 and 6).

1. The normal reducing solution: 900 cubic centimetres (grammes) distilled water are mixed with 90 cubic centimetres seignette salts solution (2), and the mixture brought to boiling over a suitable fire. During the boiling of the liquid, by which considerable steam is evolved, twenty cubic centimetres of the nitrate of silver solution are added from No. 4, by which the whole liquid is blackened. The whole is allowed to boil for ten minutes until the so-called oxytartrate of silver is formed, when the reducing liquid is ready for use. This normal liquid can be preserved any length of time; in fact, it seems to improve by age. It can be kept in flasks, and when required for use must be carefully filtered. Experience has shown that it is better to prepare the normal reducing liquid in a flask rather than in a capsule.

2. The normal silvering liquid: Nitrate of silver is dissolved in water, and ammonia gradually added until the brown precipitate is nearly all dissolved, then filtered and diluted until there is one gramme of nitrate of silver in 100 cubic centimetres of the liquid. For those who are not chemists, it is as well to take 900 cubic centimetres distilled water, add 80 cubic centimetres of the silver solution from No. 4 (1.8) and afterwards 103 drops caustic ammonia from No. 3.

3. The silvering process: Equal volumes of the liquids (1) and (2) are carefully and separately filtered, and afterwards poured together into a vessel of the proper size, and the well-cleaned glass plate introduced. In about ten minutes a decomposition of the mixture begins to take place, indicated by a blackening of the surface, and pure metallic silver will be deposited upon the plate. The introduction of the plate and the cleaning of it take place precisely as in photographic operations, otherwise irregular lines and unequal deposits of silver result. Gentle heat and sunlight facilitate the operation, while cold and darkness retard it. Finally, the plate is removed from the vessel, rinsed with pure water, and varnished or otherwise protected by a background. Good photographic varnish can be recommended for coating the film. The bath, after the operation, contains fifty to sixty per cent. of the original silver, which can be reclaimed as chloride by the addition of hydrochloric acid. Hollow ware, reagent bottles, and test tubes are silvered by simply pouring in the solutions (1) and (2) in the same way as described above. In silvering the interior of large flasks it is well to introduce a small quantity of the liquid at first, and to turn it rapidly round until the surface is covered with a thin deposit. Treated in this way, the operation becomes a very simple one, and may lead to the introduction of silver mirrors as substitutes for quicksilver glasses for very many purposes.



[UNPLEASANT VISITORS.]

CLARE ORMOND.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE aspect of affairs had improved at Ormonia in the two months Clare had been with her aunt. The house had been repaired, the lawn cleared of weeds, and everything without and within wore a renovated appearance.

Clare's letters to her father and mother had been frequent and full of details, the early ones breathing only of hope and enjoyment and the fond parents reconciled themselves to her absence by thinking how happy and fortunate she was. But the tone of her letters suddenly changed, and, in spite of her efforts to write cheerfully, it was evident to her parents that some cloud had come over her which she was unwilling to explain, and they waited in painful anxiety from week to week, hoping that an explanation would be voluntarily given, or an invitation be sent to them to visit Riverdale, when they could make their own observations and decide as to their daughter's willingness to accept the husband Mrs. Adair had chosen for her.

In the talk the two gentlemen had with each other when they met at Mrs. Ford's, Mr. Clifford had frankly stated to Mr. Ormond the wish of Mrs. Adair that his son and Miss Ormond should fall in love with and marry each other, and that on such a union depended Clare's favouritism with her aunt. It was the old lady's whim that neither of the parties most vitally concerned should have a hint of what was expected of them, and both Mr. Ormond and his wife were cautioned not to betray anything to their daughter.

The promise was kept, though it was often difficult, in their tender correspondence with the absent one, to refrain from expressing some solicitude on the subject. Clare must be left to choose for herself, ignorant of how much depended on the choice she might make.

One brief note came from Mr. Clifford, in which he said at the close:

"I think affairs are progressing according to our wishes, but nothing is certain as yet."

Mrs. Ormond was an active housewife, and breakfast was served by five o'clock in the morning in summer. At that early hour the family had gathered around the neatly set-out table, when a visitor was seen coming up the walk in front of the house.

"Who can it possibly be at this hour?" said Mrs. Ormond. "He looks like a gentleman, and—and I really do believe it is Mr. Clifford."

"Yes, it is he," said her husband, rising. "I hope

he comes to bring us cheering news of Clare. Her letters lately have filled me with vague uneasiness on her account. I will go and meet him."

A single glance at Clifford's face, as the two met, showed the father that his errand there was by no means of a joyful nature: he looked weary and anxious. Ready to take alarm for his absent child, Mr. Ormond said:

"You are most welcome here, Clifford; but I hope that you are the bearer of no evil news. Your face looks ominous. Is anything wrong with Clare? She is well, I trust?"

"She has been ill, but is better. I have come to send her mother to her, as I think she needs her presence. I have much news for you—some of a pleasant, some of a painful nature. Mrs. Adair's will is made in favour of your daughter, but the old lady died suddenly on the night afterward."

"You have come for us to go to her funeral—is it not so?"

"She is already buried. Later I will explain the apparent disrespect to you, and you will see that I acted for the best. I will not spoil your breakfast, nor that of your wife, by telling my news beforehand. To speak the truth, I am half-famished myself, for I have been up since daylight, and I have walked a long distance."

"Our matin meal has just been served, and after you have broken bread with us you can speak of what brought you hither. If Clare is in no danger I can wait patiently."

"I can safely say to you that she is in no immediate danger. Do not alarm Mrs. Ormond; all Clare needs at present is the guardianship of her mother. Once safe with her, all will go well. I should tell you, perhaps, that she is betrothed to my son, and they seem tenderly attached to each other."

"I am glad to hear that. Now I know that all is indeed safe for her. The old lady carried her point, then made her will, I suppose?"

Mr. Clifford nodded, and they went in together. Mrs. Ormond welcomed her guest with the graceful ease that distinguished her, and he replied to her inquiries concerning Clare in such a manner as to avoid betraying anything unpleasant. Christine and Victor were presented to him, and he quite won their hearts by describing life at Riverdale to them, and promising that before long they should both visit their sister at that enchanting place.

When the meal was over Mrs. Ormond walked beside her guest to the front piazza, and earnestly said:

"I am not half satisfied with your replies to my questions, Mr. Clifford. There is a strange reticence about you when you speak of my aunt. Did she send

me no message? no invitation to visit her? I cannot tell you how anxious I am to make her acquaintance."

"You will never make it in this world now, Mrs. Ormond," was the grave reply. "Mrs. Adair died two nights since, and I came hither to tell you and your husband that news, as well as other things that are of the deepest interest to you. Can I speak in private with you and him?"

The bright rose tint on her cheeks faded slightly, but she hastened to say:

"Of course we are ready to listen to anything you have to say, though I fear from your manner that it is something more painful even than the news of Mrs. Adair's sudden death. Is—Clare concerned in what you have to tell us? Has anything gone wrong with her?"

"Clare is deeply concerned, Mrs. Ormond; but let me say to you that I believe all will come right for her and for my son, who loves and is betrothed to her. But at present she is in great trouble, and we must use both craft and skill in extricating her from it."

"Trouble! Has that wretched John Spiers come back again to threaten her, now that her aunt is dead? Explain, I entreat, Mr. Clifford, for it makes me apprehensive only to think of that wretch being on her path again."

"I believe that the man you speak of is in league with the young woman who has lived with Mrs. Adair as companion. I came hither to consult with Mr. Ormond and yourself as to the measures we had best take to unmask the villainy of which they hope to make Clare the victim."

Mrs. Ormond became so pale and trembled so excessively that Mr. Clifford was alarmed.

"Dear madam, I have been too abrupt—I should have used more finesse; but my mind is so full of this villainy that I forgot how new it is to you—how deeply a mere hint of it must shock you."

Ormond passed his arm around the trembling form of his wife, and the three sat down on a wide bench which ran along that end of the piazza. He said:

"Annette has courage to hear as well as or even better than I can. Tell us the worst at once, Clifford, then we can devise means to circumvent that base man, who, I now believe, knew from the first of the prospect Clare had of becoming an heiress. That is why he sought her; and now that Mrs. Adair is dead, and her wealth comes to my child, he is on her track again."

"I strongly suspect that he has never been off it. The voyage was a ruse to lull suspicion. I possess no proof that Claudia Coyle is in league with him, but I have in my own mind almost a conviction that a

man she has been in the habit of meeting clandestinely in the grounds about Riverdale is John Spiers, and I have come hither to obtain such evidence as will save your daughter from falling a victim to one of the deepest-laid plots that ever was concocted. You must both summon all your firmness to listen calmly to what I have to reveal; it will shock and pain you deeply, but you must be told."

By this time Mrs. Ormond had regained that self-control which women of strong nature can practise in moments of deepest torture. She no longer trembled, and her voice was steady as she said:

"Give us the facts, Mr. Clifford. This is no time to shiver and grow pale; the danger is too imminent—it touches us too nearly, through our child, to allow us to think of our own suffering. When we have done all that is possible for her rescue and failed, it will be time enough to sit down and bewail our lot."

"You are right, madam, and in you I recognise the spirit of a hero. I will tell you all I know, and all I suspect; then Ormond and I must come down like a thunderbolt on old Spiers, and wring from him such information as he can give of his unprincipled son."

Mr. Clifford went on to state, as concisely as possible, the history of the love charm, and the use made of it by Clara—of the letter left by Claudia Coyle, stating that it was poison, and that it had been used by the heiress of Mrs. Adair's wealth to enable her to gain possession of the old lady's hoards without too great delay.

We pass over the exclamations uttered by the pale mother while this explanation proceeded. But for one statement made by Mr. Clifford, she would have given up all hope of saving her child from the snare that had been laid for her; but that gave her courage, and she said, when he had finished:

"We can and will save her. But will she be quite safe in your absence from Riverdale, Mr. Clifford? Spiers may force himself into her presence, and Heaven knows what he may next attempt."

"She is quite safe from intrusion, I assure you. My son is on guard, and he loves her devotedly. Miss Brooke, a sensible woman and a true friend, is with her, and will remain at Riverdale till you arrive there, Mrs. Ormond, and take your daughter in charge yourself. I think, however, it will be best for you to leave by the twelve-o'clock boat, if it be possible to do so."

"Of course it is; anything is possible in such a crisis as this. I will get ready in time, and leave you and my husband to follow me as soon as you have unearthed John Spiers."

"Before we set out on that errand I should like to see the old woman through whose silly superstition all this wretched complication has arisen. If her nurse had not imbued Clara's mind with such nonsense, this hold could never have been obtained over her."

"I always set my face against it, and reprimanded her nurse when I found her telling her wild stories to my children," said Mrs. Ormond; "but what could I do with a nurse who was many years older than I, and thought herself twice as wise? She will be sorry enough when she knows to what danger she has exposed Clara, for she is fondly attached to her; but even this will not shake her faith in her favourite superstition."

Mr. Ormond arose, looking stern, and said:

"I will summon the woman, and we will learn from her every particular connected with her visit to old Nancy Blodge. It is my belief that Spiers tampered with the fortune-teller, and that a slow poison was designed to be given to the old woman. How he has been foiled I cannot understand, but I hope we shall be able to find out."

In a few moments he came back, followed by the nurse, with that peculiar ashen colour seen on a face when in mortal terror. She shook like an aspen leaf.

Her master had only said to her:

"Come with me to be examined about that bottle of trash you gave your young mistress. She is accused of having poisoned her aunt because she used it. If you do not speak the whole truth I will have you severely punished."

The nurse would have replied, but her tongue seemed frozen with terror, and with difficulty she managed to totter after her master, feeling very much as if the day of judgment had come for her.

Seeing that she was unable to stand, Mr. Ormond pushed forward a chair and said:

"Sit there. You are a criminal arraigned for your life now, remember, and speaking the whole truth is all that can save you. Answer such questions as this gentleman will put to you, and be careful that you tell neither more nor less than has actually happened."

The nurse sank on the chair in a limp heap, too deeply horrified to understand anything clearly, but that she was on trial for life or death.

Mr. Clifford waited for a few moments, to allow her time to compose herself, then quietly said:

"I wish you to collect your faculties, woman, and tell me when and whence you obtained a phial of liquid called a love charm which you gave to Miss Ormond before she left her home. Do not be frightened. I believe that you intended no evil to her."

She began to rock herself to and fro, muttering:

"Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?"

"There is nothing for you to do but to speak out, and that pretty quickly too, for we have no time to waste on you," said her master, sternly. "Stop that maudering, and tell Mr. Clifford what he wishes to know."

Thus admonished, she made an effort to straighten herself up, and whispered:

"I ain't got nuffin to tell him but what he knows a'ready. I gin the thing to her, an' I ain't 'sponsible for what was in it. Old Nance gin it to me, an' she said as how it were a powerful love charm. That's all I know about it, an' you couldn't git no more out of me if you was to tear me to pieces wi' wild hosses."

"Tell me all the particulars of your visit to this Nancy Blodge, and where she is to be found," said Mr. Clifford, still trying to reassure her.

"She ain't to be found no where. She's gone, an' nobody knows what's come o' her."

The two gentlemen exchanged glances.

"Come now, I have forbore towards you long enough. You've had time to gather your senses and answer rationally. Give me a minute account of what happened on the night you went to get from Nancy this pretended love charm. Call to mind the most trifling thing, for on that perhaps the safety of your young mistress may depend. She is in danger, and if you do not speak something dreadful may happen to her."

After a brief pause the nurse straightened herself, and said:

"I'd do anything for Miss Clara. I nursed her in these arms, and her own mother can't love her much better than I do. I meant to serve her when I got that bottle from Nancy, and I can't believe there was nothing in it that was wrong."

"You mean anything in it, I suppose?"

"I don't know what I mean. I'll try to tell you about the visit I made to Nancy's cottage. I saw her the first time in the woods gathering herbs when I was on the way to have a talk with her. Well, of course we talked together awhile, and I asked her about what I wanted. She said she knew all about it, and if I would come to her house the next night she would have it ready for me."

"Of course you went. What happened then? and who did you see there besides old Nancy?"

"How did you know there was anybody there? I am sure I did not expect to find anybody at that old cottage; but there was a man there, talking with her."

"What sort of a man was he? Young or old? tall or fair?"

"He was neither one nor the other; but I could not get a good look at him, because he kept his hat pressed over his face; but he had a lot of white hair. When he went out I saw that he was a tall man, with shapely legs, and shiny boots on his feet."

"Ah-h!" said Clifford, with a long breath. "There is some light here. That is the very man I have seen walking with Claudia Coyle at night. Go on. You are putting us on the right track now, and you will yet help us to expose the villainy of which you and your young lady have been made the unconscious agents. Tell us what occurred after the visitor went away."

"Tain't much to tell, sir, but I'll do my best. Old Nance seemed flustered at me finding the man there, and she turned sharp to me, and told me she wasn't looking for me for an hour yet, and asked me what I meant by coming before my time. I pacified her the best way I could, and when she got in a good humour she laughed and joked with me, and told me that the elixir I'd come after was worth its weight in gold, that I was getting it cheap at two and sixpence, which was all she'd ask me for it, and a mighty scramble I had to get that much money. But I was determined to do all I could for Miss Clara, and I knew enough about Mrs. Adair to be certain sure she'd need something to keep her in the good graces of the old lady. So I sold my speckled pullet, with her first chickens, being only six of them, and the money I got for them went to pay for that charm. That's all I know about it, if I was going to die this blessed minute."

Mr. Clifford looked disappointed; he presently said:

"You saw nothing more of the white-haired man, I suppose; that is, on your way home, I mean?"

"No, sir. I didn't see anything more of him, but I met another fellow, and a curious thing happened. I never knew what he meant by stopping me, but he stood just in front of me, and said:

"Halt, there; where do you come from?"

"I was annoyed with him for his impudence, and I said: 'You ain't a policeman, and I ain't going to stop for you.' The moon was shining, and when the wind blew his hat off I knew him. 'Twas old Mrs. Beal's son, and old Nance's cottage was on one corner of his mother's farm."

"Young Beal!" exclaimed Mr. Ormond, breathlessly. "He is in Spiers's shop. What did he say to you? Be careful now, for a great deal depends on your answer."

"He only chaffed me, as boys will, you know, and he ain't seventeen yet. He accused me of going to Nance to get some of her trash, and said he could make me something ever so much better. I denied that, and at last he somehow got me to confess that I had a bottle of her mixture, and to let him look at it. He took the bottle in his hands, and twisted and turned it about, then when I got angry because I thought he didn't mean to give it back to me, he laughed, and said: 'How much did you pay for this now, you old goose? It's worth about threepence, and I suppose you gave ten times that much for it. It ain't nothing but soda and water, with a little yellow colouring mixed up with it.'

"You can believe that I were nearly mad at that, because I knew he was not up to old Nance's doings. I told him it was no business of his what I paid for it, and I spoke my mind out to him about his rudeness in stopping me when I was attending to my own business. At that he wore polite as a dancing-master. He made me a low bow, and handed back my bottle, and I went away as fast as I could, while he laughed again, and called out after me, 'I hope your mess of stuff will do no harm; then he went on whistling with all his might.'

Mr. Clifford drew a long breath, as if a heavy weight had been lifted from his breast. He calmly said:

"You have given us a valuable clue, and you may go now. Quiet your nerves, and keep a still tongue in your mouth. You are not to breathe a word of what has passed here this morning. I think we can undo all the wrong that has been perpetrated, and, with the help of young Beal, bring the real criminals to justice."

The nurse, in spite of this assurance, went away looking crest-fallen and forlorn.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MR. CLIFFORD turned to Mr. Ormond and asked: "Who is this young Beal? and what is his character?"

"He is the only son of a widow who owns a small farm. The place is worn out, and I think there must be very good management to make both ends meet at the close of the year, for Mrs. Beal has three daughters, each younger than her son George. The boy, so far as I know him, is a straight-forward, clever lad, and not likely to abet any rascality, though he has been with such a man as Spiers for the last three years learning how to make pills and mix potions."

"I am glad to hear that he has good principles; he knows more of this elixir than any one else except Spiers and his son, and his evidence will be valuable. I think we had better lose no time in seeing him, Ormond. I almost grasp the truth now, and if it is as I believe, we can take Beal back with us, and go by the same steamer with Mrs. Ormond to confront him with those conspirators who flatter themselves that they have the game in their own hands."

"If you can only do that, Mr. Clifford, I shall be almost happy," cried Mrs. Ormond, grasping his hands. "Oh, my poor child! Let us only be in time to save her, and I shall thank and bless you all my life."

"I keep a carriage and horse now," said Mr. Ormond, "and at this hour they are always ready to take me to town. We can be there in a few moments, and as we have a good six hours before us in which to work we may possibly be ready in time for the steamer."

In a few moments the vehicle stood at the door, with a stout roan horse throwing up his head, and showing his impatience to start.

As they were leaving Mrs. Ormond said:

"I shall prepare for you to accompany me to Riverdale. I feel almost certain that you will be able to do it."

"Heaven grant it!" was the brief reply.

A moment later they were sweeping down the road at a brisk trot.

Mrs. Ormond went in to make her arrangements for a week's absence, and Christine, to her great delight, was told that the house would be left in her charge, and Victor left under her management. The old servants would be protection enough in a quiet neighbourhood, it was decided, especially as there was little in the house to tempt a burglar, if one should be prowling in that vicinity.

Christine supposed her parents were going to Mrs.

Adair's funeral, and she was so much elated with the information that the old lady had bequeathed her fortune to her sister that she could neither speak nor think of anything else.

With swift fingers she aided her mother in her preparations for her journey, and by ten o'clock all was in readiness for her departure.

In the meantime the two gentlemen had driven straight to Mr. Spiers's place of business. The old man was the only person in the shop when they entered, and a half-scared expression came into his face, succeeded by a vindictive scowl, as he recognised Mr. Ormond.

He offered him no greeting, but stood glaring at the unwelcome intruder, waiting for him to speak.

"I suppose you hardly expected to see me here again, Spiers; but you see I have not done with you yet. I have brought my friend Mr. Clifford to witness our interview this time, and I think it will have more important results than any that has hitherto passed between us."

At the name of Mr. Ormond's companion Spiers visibly winced, but he recovered himself, and insolently replied:

"I wish neither yourself nor your friends to come into my house, Mr. Ormond. You've insulted me often enough, I think; but the longest lane has a turn, and we've got to it now. I am not going to put up with anything more from you, I can tell you."

"Oh, ho! I suppose you think you've got the whip-hand of me, but you were never more mistaken in your life. I'll pay you out now, you vile blot on humanity, for all the villany you have been guilty of in your loathsome life. I have spared you long enough, but this last crime shall be atoned for if I be forced to take your life myself in expiation of it."

The cadaverous face of Spiers became almost livid, and he could not control the tremor that seized him.

"Have—have you gone mad, Mr. Ormond, that you assail me in this way? I shall be glad if your friend here will explain your meaning, as you seem to be in no condition to do so yourself. I deride your threats, and defy them."

Before Clifford could speak the enraged father strode up to the counter behind which Spiers had taken refuge, and, shaking his fist in his face, cried out:

"You think that you have my child in your power, and that will cow me into silence; but you were never more mistaken in your life, you miserable dog! She is safe from you—safe, do you hear, though Mrs. Adair is dead. Your base son meant to fasten on her the charge of murder, that he might force her to marry him to induce him to conceal it, but we know enough to foil him at that game."

With a gasp, Spiers fell back on a chair as if he had been shot. At that moment George Beal, who had been out on an errand, entered the shop, looking excited and a little scared.

A curious change came over his face as he saw Mr. Ormond, and he rushed up to him, saying:

"Is it true, Mr. Ormond, that Mrs. Adair is dead? I saw it in the paper just now, and I thought it must be the same old lady Miss Clare went to live with. If it is, sir, it's lucky you are here, for I have something important to tell you."

"I came here to find you, George, and if you can do what I hope, your future is safe for life, my boy. Don't fear to speak up; my daughter is rich, and she can more than make up to you what you will lose by leaving the employment of yonder trembling wretch."

"It's not that I am thinking of, sir. I've only been waiting for things to come to a climax that my strange story might stand a chance to be believed. No harm can come to Miss Clare. I took good care of that."

"Shut that door and lock it, George, then we'll have the truth out of that vindictive old scoundrel who sits glowering and trembling yonder."

"You shan't shut my door," screamed Spiers. "Do it, if you dare, you young viper, that I've warned in my bosom only to be stung by you. I'll shoot you if you lay a hand on that lock."

He drew a pistol from his pocket, and, with a hand that was almost palsied by fright, attempted to level it at the lad, but Mr. Clifford wrenched it from his grasp, and coolly said:

"There are two policemen who have been watching this house since five o'clock this morning, by my orders, and any hostile demonstration on your part will be speedily followed by arrest. We have come here to have a settlement with you, Mr. Spiers, and we intend to learn the truth about this infamous conspiracy, at all hazards."

Spiers sank down as if collapsed, and for a moment he seemed on the verge of fainting. He had heard from his son of the death of Mrs. Adair, and received from him the assurance that before many days her heirs would be in his power, either by fraud or violence; and just as he was preparing to triumph

over his old enemy, by throwing in his face the accusation of murder against his daughter, he came to proclaim his knowledge of the whole plot, and consign those engaged in it to the punishment they merited. A coward at heart, in the moment of danger he had no resources with which to defend himself. He sat there, abject, despicable, shrinking before the stern men who held him at their mercy.

The door was shut and locked. Spiers was seized and brought from behind the counter, with no effort at resistance from him. Both moral and physical strength seemed to have deserted him, for he submitted without even a remonstrance; he possibly saw that words would be useless while in the hands of the outraged and enraged father.

Beal threw open the door of the inner room, and Mr. Ormond thrust his captive into an arm-chair which stood near the centre of the floor, and sternly said:

"I shall first hear what Beal has to tell me, then I shall deal with you. Now, George, speak out, and tell me how you managed to baffle the fiendish plot of that man and his son."

There was in the partition wall a space which had once been filled by a door. It was in an inconvenient position, and Spiers had caused another to be made, boarding up the first, and papering it on the side next to the shop. A few days before the interview between himself and his son, in which the latter unveiled his intentions with regard to Clara, Beal, in packing some heavy articles in that corner, had started one of the planks, leaving a crevice nearly half an inch in width. As he was often severely scolded, and his small salary kept back, if accidents happened, he said nothing of this, intending to restore the plank to its place when an opportunity offered.

After explaining this he went on to say:

"John Spiers never treated me well, but one morning he was ruder to me than usual when he came in here and found me packing some things. He ordered me out, and told me not to go eavesdropping to hear what he and the old man had to say to each other. I shouldn't have thought of such a thing if he hadn't put it in my head. I remembered the crack in the wall, and I put my ear to it as soon as they shut the door on me. I was scared at what I heard 'em say, John had had letters from a girl that was living with a rich old lady, who meant to send for Miss Clara Ormond to go and live with her, and if she liked her, she'd give her all her money when she died."

Beal then went on, and gave as clear an account of the conspiracy as he could, interrupted at every new statement by a sharp, hissing sentence from the villain on the chair:

"You lie, you young viper; you lie, and you know it!"

Little notice was taken of this feeble attempt to defend himself, and the lad at length came to that portion of his statement for which Mr. Clifford impatiently waited.

"When I found out what they meant to do to get Mrs. Adair out of the way, and to fix on Miss Ormond the charge of killing her, I made up my mind that I'd take a hand with 'em, and hold the trumps. I owed a grudge to John Spiers for always running over me, and I meant to let him go the length of his tether, then bring him up with a sharp jerk."

"I watched them after that, and I found out where the old man kept the elixir he was getting ready for John to give Nancy Blodge. As he didn't suspect me, it was easy enough for me to get at it and see what it looked like. He put the bottle in a private drawer of his desk, but I knew how to open that as well as he did, and I took a phial exactly like the one he used, and made a mixture of soda, with a little arsenic to colour it, and a few drops of violet perfume."

"Mr. Spiers sealed up his bottle with red wax, and put a strip of paper on the outside, with six marks upon it, to show that six drops must be given at one dose. I made up mine exactly like it, and put his back in the drawer, keeping possession of the other. I got possession of his afterwards, and I have it now with the seal unbroken, and I will give it to you to be analysed, Mr. Ormond."

Spiers at this uttered a groan, and cried out:

"He is making the whole story up; there's not a word of truth in it. If there is poison in that bottle he has put it in himself, that, good as I have been to him, he may ruin me and my son."

"Silence!" said Ormond, sternly. "Your denials signify nothing, and only interrupt the business in hand."

Then, turning to Beal, he said:

"I hope you have that bottle at hand. Time is precious. It is my wish to get to my daughter as soon as possible, that I may protect her from the machinations of that wretch."

With sudden fire, Spiers cried out:

"He's no more a wretch than you are, Reginald Or-

mond, and he'll yet save himself and torture you by marrying the girl before you can reach her. You had better mind how you disgrace us, for your daughter will be John's wife before you get to Riverdale, as sure as you are standing there."

Ormond glared on him, and with pale lips said:

"In that case I will pursue him and kill him with my own hand. Do you think I would trust my child with him for an hour, when I know that it is his purpose to possess himself of her fortune and put her out of the way that he may marry that fiend in woman's shape, Claudia Coyle?"

"It will be an even chance which will get killed if you do follow him, and John isn't the man to be taken by surprise. He'll have the girl and her money too. I've got over my surprise now, and you'll see that we'll fight you to the bitter end, and win in the long run too."

Mr. Clifford here spoke:

"This is wasting time. Be silent, prisoner, for I hold you as such, and do not dare to interrupt again. Beal, tell us as briefly as possible what remains to be told."

"Yes, sir; I'll come to the end quickly now. I carried that bottle about me, and followed up John Spiers sharp enough. Nancy's cottage was on my mother's land, and I kept an eye on her every night, because I knew that whoever went to see her generally went after dark. I saw John go to her cabin, and I listened outside. It was easy enough to hear all that went on, and to see too, for that matter, for there were plenty of cracks in the walls. I heard the bargain he made with her to give the bottle he brought with him to the nurse—Miss Ormond's nurse—in place of the one the old crone had prepared for her."

"The nurse came before Spiers went away, but as he was disguised with a gray wig she did not know him. When he left the women talked together, and I saw the bottle old Spiers had prepared given to the nurse, and she thought it was a real love charm that would bring good luck to her young mistress. I watched for her on the road, and stopped her with some nonsense. I banted her till she let me look at the bottle she carried so carefully, and while pretending to examine it I made the exchange I desired, and sent her off with a preparation that was harmless as water. The poison I locked up in a box at home, and I've carried the key about me ever since. I can run home, get it, and be back in half an hour."

"You have done bravely and well, Beal," said Mr. Clifford, warmly; "but why have you kept silent so long? You should have gone to Mr. Ormond at once, and stated all you knew."

"I see that I ought now, but I wanted to trap John and pay him back; and I wanted to see what he would do when the old lady didn't die. When I saw the paper this morning, and found her death in it, I was frightened, I tell you, and I ran back here to get leave to go home for an hour or two, intending to go to Mr. Ormond's house and tell him all I knew. I found him here, and that is all I have to tell."

"That is enough, George; you have saved my child, and made a friend for life in me. Leave this disgraceful house and come with me. I will care for you and yours in future myself, and, thanks to Mrs. Adair's liberality, I am able to do it."

"I'll be very glad to get away, Mr. Ormond; for I am thoroughly tired of the way I've been treated. If the little I earned hadn't been so important to my mother, I would never have stayed this long. When I changed the bottles I didn't think of anything but getting Miss Clara out of a bad scrape; but I'll be very glad if you can help me to get away from old Spiers. He and I don't suit each other."

"I should think not, indeed. Honesty and baseness rarely do. You are quit of him now, my lad, for ever."

"So you may all think," said Spiers, with vicious emphasis; "but you'll find yourselves mistaken. I'll yet prove a vile fabrication all that boy has stated, and I'll make Clara Ormond plead for mercy on her bonded knees. She destroyed her aunt, and all this is got up to screen her from the punishment she richly deserves. You'll find out, Reggy Ormond, that you'll not have things all your own way. You have attacked me in my own house, which is my castle, and I'll have the law of you for that. I'll indict you for conspiracy against an honest man, and, unless that girl of yours marries my son, I'll bring her to the halter—that's what I'll do."

Spiers looked frightful as he raved thus. The pallor of his face had changed to a blotched purple hue, and his eyes were injected with blood. In his impotent rage he had bitten his lower lip through, and a small stream of blood trickled down on his white shirt front.

Mr. Clifford attentively regarded him, then said:

"This is simply raving, Mr. Spiers. Miss Ormond is safe, and the villany of yourself and your son

must recoil upon your own heads. I am something of a medical man, and I see in your face indications that are not to be mistaken. If you do not calm yourself, you will be in no condition to do anything in half an hour from this time."

"I don't believe you. I am strong and well as any one, and you are only trying to frighten me, that I may turn into a puling idiot, and confess all that you would like to have said, that Clara Ormond may be saved from the fate she has earned for herself. Go to the deuce with your predictions. I want none of them."

Clifford shrugged his shoulders.

"I have warned you, and I know what I say. I will tell you something before you fall into a fit which will show you that another avenger has been on your track besides young Beal. I accidentally saw Miss Ormond mixing something with the night draught of her aunt, and, without letting her know what I had seen, I removed the lemonade, and prepared more myself for Mrs. Adair's use. My son is a good chemist, and he analysed the liquid I carried to him. We found nothing deleterious in it, but we took the precaution to renew the draught every night, after the poor child had tampered with it in the innocent belief that she was only winning the old lady over to love her. We have a portion of that lemonade sealed up, that others may judge of it as we did. To made assurance double sure, there was a post-mortem examination of Mrs. Adair's stomach, and not a trace of poison was found. She died of aneurism of the heart, from which she had suffered for several years."

As Mr. Clifford went on, speaking with deliberate impressiveness, a glassy expression came into the hard eyes that were lifted to his, and there was a faint twitching of the lower part of the discoloured face. When he had finished speaking, Spiers muttered: "Baffled—baffled at every point!" and fell forward on the floor, writhing and moaning as if in pain.

When they lifted him, blood was flowing from his mouth, and Mr. Ormond said:

"A higher power has saved us from the trouble of dealing with him; there will soon be one reptile less on the face of this fair earth, which he, and such as he, endeavour to make a pandemonium. He may not die, though he is very ill. We had better call his wife to look after him; but, to make sure of him, I shall leave a policeman in charge of the house, with injunctions to keep a strict watch over him."

At that moment the roar door of the room was suddenly burst open, and a tall Amazon, with dark hair and flashing eyes, bounded in.

"What's all this here to-do, and why is the front door shut up in business hours? A nice way to make money that is, to be sure. What's the matter, I say?"

Ormond knew her by sight; he stepped forward, and said:

"Your husband has been taken suddenly ill, Mrs. Spiers, and we were just about to send you word."

"You here, Mr. Ormond? I don't know how you dared to show your face in this house after what's passed between you and my husband. What have you been doing to him to make him like this?"

"We—my friend and I—have been telling him some plain truths; that is all, madam. Mr. Spiers had better be taken to his room, and a physician sent for. He is in a dangerous condition."

"If he is, you've put him in it, and I'll have you arrested for it," was the fierce reply. "What do you mean by coming into our house and using its master this here way?"

"I mean to have justice, madam; but that is out of the question just at present. If your husband had not fallen into a fit, he would have slept in jail to-night. For the present he will only be watched over by a policeman to see that he does not escape."

"Escape what?"

She burst into a volley of violent abuse, which the gentlemen were glad to escape by going away and taking Beal with them.

A crowd had begun to collect in front of the door, curious to ascertain why it was closed during business hours, and in a few moments Mrs. Spiers had more assistance than she needed to convey her husband to the upper apartments.

It was several hours before he became conscious; but when he could speak he whispered to his wife:

"The only chance left is that John will secure her before they get to Riverdale. He's safe to do it; so have the parson ready as soon as they get in the house. When they're once married all will be right enough."

(To be continued.)

THE Jews of Turin are erecting a magnificent synagogue, which will, it is said, be the finest structure of the kind in the world. It is like a Greek temple in form, mounted on a little elevation, and elegant and grandiose. Its massive tower is rather

bizarre, but the whole structure calls to one's mind visions of Nineveh and Thebes.

WHO WILL WIN HIM?

A PARTY of merry village maidens had gathered in their favourite resort, a beautiful shaded grove, and under the branches of a magnificent oak they sat weaving garlands of wild flowers.

"How dull our village has grown! I declare I'm positively pining away, almost to a skeleton. If something do not turn up to relieve this monotony, and produce a reaction—in a word, put new life into me—I shall die!" exclaimed Madge Hunter, a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked girl of eighteen, weighing at least a hundred and forty pounds.

Madge's words and tragic manner brought forth a peal of laughter from her companions; but above their voices sounded another, a loud, full, hearty laugh. The girls turned quickly, and exclaimed, simultaneously:

"Uncle Phil!"

The merriest old bachelor that ever lived was Uncle Phil Freeman. The girls all loved him, and his great delight was to make them happy. He had stolen quietly up to where they were, and heard Madge's declaration.

"Poor little Madge! Uncle Phil must see if he cannot bring back the roses to your cheeks, and tie you in some way to this world, or I'm fearful the first hard wind will blow you away. What can I do for you?"

"Oh, Uncle Phil, Madge is just dying for a flirtation—that is it, I know. She has been behaving herself wonderfully well, really. Peyton Marsden has been away six months, and Madge has not attempted to break any poor fellow's heart yet," said one of the merry girls.

"A very good reason, she has had no chance. Indeed, it is positively a dreadful story to relate, that there has neither been an engagement declared nor a marriage ceremony performed in our village for over a year. I declare I shall leave here, and take up my abode, not in another world, but in some other place in this one, where I shall not stand such a chance of spending the rest of my days in single blessedness. Just think of a place that cannot boast of one marriageable young man! Horrors! I'm off now," exclaimed Kate Harlow.

"No, no; not just yet. I've hope for you. Wait, and hear the news," said Uncle Phil.

"Oh, I suppose you are going to tell us in a few days we shall have Peyton Marsden back, and the wedding soon after."

"No. That may all happen, but there is a chance for another wedding. Yours, maybe. You know Marm Haven advertised for boarders. Well, she has got them—a young gentleman with his invalid mother."

"How does any one know he is either young or single?" asked Kate.

"Why, if he was old and double, most likely some of the sick lady's grandchildren would be more likely to attend her. Don't you see? Then hear his name—Paul Revere! Is that the name for an old fellow with a wife and a dozen young ones?"

"No, no. You are right, Uncle Phil. He is young, unmarried, handsome, and—"

"Rich? Yes, rich, too; for Marm Haven read me the letter, in which he said they wanted the very best accommodation, with the attendance of a servant for his mother. For both a liberal price would be paid. They will remain, if agreeably situated, three months. Now, if one of you five girls do not succeed in catching Mr. Paul, I'll disown all of you."

"Five? No, Uncle Phil, there are only four. Madge is out of the question," said Kate.

"That's so. It is well for you she is. Now, who will catch him? Madge, as you are not interested, you shall express your opinion about the merits of each and their respective chances. Now begin."

"Oh, Uncle Phil, I'm gaining flesh and strength, already. No danger of my leaving the world now. When is he coming? This is just what I want! What fun we shall have—you and I—watching these girls! If he only knew what danger he was coming into! It requires a man of great courage to come into a village where there are four spinsters waiting to secure him. But then, as he knows nothing of this, we cannot accredit him with an over-amount of bravery," said Madge.

"Well, well, begin. What say you of Kate's chance?" said Uncle Phil.

"About the best I should think. Besides her own personal charms—Kate is really handsome, you know—there is her father's wealth, which may weigh very heavily in her favour."

"May be so," said Uncle Phil.

"Rose May's golden curls and laughing blue eyes

will have a powerful effect on the young man, if he is a dark, gipsy-looking one, as I think he ought to be with that name. Ada Kendall has her glorious brown eyes to make a charge with, and being supported with wit, intelligence, and her altogether charming manner, I should not wonder if the young man yielded at once to her, particularly if he has any aspirations to secure a wife who will be a very brilliant star in the fashionable firmament."

"Very likely. You are rendering full justice to your companions' charms, Madge. Now last comes little Dora. What of her?"

"Dora! let me think!"

"Never mind, Madge, please. I will relieve you of a difficult task—that is, to find anything at all charming about me. I will sum up my possessions: plain-looking, a little short of positive ugliness; only moderately intelligent; poor, and almost friendless—"

"No, no, Dora, you must not talk so. You are not so brilliant, or strikingly handsome as these other girls; therefore your chance is not quite so good. You, shy little bird, have to be known to be appreciated. You know Uncle Phil calls you his Daisy—for you always hide away, and never let folks have a chance of seeing how lovely you really are. Now, if I were the young gentleman in question, and in search of true happiness, I should certainly choose you; for every day I lived with you would reveal new beauties in your nature. You dear, loving, earnest, devoted little thing, you are just too good for any man—except Uncle Phil," said Madge, winding her arms about Dora Brownson.

"I cannot flatter myself any others will regard me as you, Madge, or as Uncle Phil does."

"Well, well, Madge, I would just as leave others wouldn't. We would like to keep you from anybody that might win you away from us. Mine you are to be, anyhow, eventually, either in one relation or another, just which you choose—the old man's darling, daughter, or wife. Now, young ladies, you all understand Dora has a standing offer, which, however, will not in any way prevent her entering the list against you in the coming contest," said Uncle Phil.

It was growing dark, and the girls separated for their respective homes. Three of them were already busy with thoughts and plans to captivate Paul Revere, who would arrive that day week, Uncle Phil had told them. Kate, Rose, and Ada regarded each other with anxious, jealous hearts. They had no fears of Dora. Quite likely Paul Revere's eyes might never behold her. She seldom was seen at any gay resort, her time and care being all devoted to a very infirm grandmother, Dora's only living relative.

If the girls had for an instant thought of her as a rival, should the young gentleman see her, which might likely be brought about through Uncle Phil's agency, their minds were set entirely at ease, for a few days after the evening they were together in the grove Dora's grandmother grew very ill, and the devoted girl never left her side.

How busy the girls were during the next week, collecting and inspecting their stores of ribbons and laces. Dresses were remodelled; raven braids and golden ringlets arranged in numberless different ways, the fair owners endeavouring to decide which was the most becoming style. Although it would seem almost impossible they could find a spare moment from these important matters to get out of the house, Uncle Phil declared positively, and no one thought of ever doubting his word, that he had seen Rose, Kate, and Ada, each at different hours, chatting with Marm Haven every day during the week before the arrival of her boarders. He had heard her say that she never knew before how very sweet and agreeable those girls were. She wondered how it was she had never found it out, as long as she had known them. But then, somehow or other, she had never seen so much of them as lately.

How Uncle Phil chuckled when he told Madge, and she clapped her dimpled hands and laughed until she cried. The fun had commenced already.

The day for Paul Revere and his mother's arrival in the village at length came, and the three girls, by mutual consent, were at the station to catch a glimpse of them, or rather of Paul. They had very little thought about the sick mother, or cared whether she bore her journey well or suffered from the fatigue. Marm Haven's boy Tim, in a very uncomfortable vehicle, on which hours had been spent in washing and rubbing to make it at all presentable, was in waiting. The girls saw the boy step up and speak to a young gentleman who stood on the platform supporting on his arm a pale, elderly woman. Another moment and Tim was tugging at one of three trunks near by. There was no mistaking then that Paul Revere and his mother were before them—but, alas for the dark-eyed, magnificent fellow of their dreams—a pleasant, moderately good-looking young man, fair, with light hair and honest, clear blue eyes was there. Nothing of the romantic or poetical about him.

Down went Rose's hopes. He would never take to her surely. They were too nearly alike. She did not care to have him. She should retire from the field, and wait until the dark hero of her dreams should turn up.

Just as the last trunk was strapped on, and Paul Revere was descending with his mother to enter the vehicle, Squire Harlow's large, comfortable carriage drew up in front of the station, by chance of course, and Fred jumped down and said to his sister:

"Want to ride home, Kate?"

Kate did not; preferred walking. Then the kind-hearted, thoughtful Fred said:

"Then I'm going to offer to take that sick lady up to Marm Haven's. That old concern Tim has there will jolt her to death."

Kate remarked, apparently very unconcerned:

"Just as you choose."

A few moments after, the girl saw Squire Harlow's carriage rolled away with Paul Revere and his mother.

Now the mystery of the wild rattle-brain, Fred Harlow, becoming so suddenly kind and considerate, might be accounted for with the knowledge of Fred's displaying a handsome pocket-book pretty well filled with stamps, and saying his Kate gave it to him.

The matrons of the village were very kind and attentive to Paul and his mother—none more so than Mrs. Harlow. Almost every day her carriage was sent for Mrs. Revere to take a ride. Her kindness of course was fully appreciated by the son, who frequently called at the squire's to express his thanks. Kate's chances were admitted by all to be the very best. But Kate was by no means a favourite of Madge's; and, as Rose had withdrawn from the contest, Madge determined to give affairs a little turn, and let Ada have a chance.

Being engaged, as every one knew, Madge could not act as she chose with regard to Paul Revere and his mother, without any one accusing her of interested motives. So she did the agreeable to Mrs. Revere, and quite won the old lady's heart. Nowhere in the village did she enjoy spending the afternoon so much as with Madge and her mother. Of course Paul always attended her, and there he met Ada. After which she shared his attention with Kate, who, growing uneasy, redoubled her efforts, and with very good effect. It was impossible for Paul to resist the combined force of the squire, Mrs. Harlow, Fred, and Kate, so he was in a fair way of being captured.

If left to his natural impulse, I think Ada would have been the successful one. His admiration was very apparent.

Uncle Phil and Madge were often with Dora, endeavouring to cheer her and relieve as much as possible her sad duties. Her grandmother was sinking rapidly.

From these Dora heard of Paul and his mother. Uncle Phil had grown quite fond of the young man, and spoke with much warmth of his good qualities and devotion to his mother.

"He is too good for Kate. I think she is selfish, and—well, I don't believe she'll be any comfort to his mother. I wish, little girl, it was so that I could put you in the field against her. Well, maybe something will turn up yet. There is many a slip between cup and lip," said Uncle Phil.

A few evenings after this remark was made Mrs. Harlow, with Mrs. Revere in the carriage, was out for a drive, accompanied by Kate and Paul on horse-back.

Never was Kate so charming, and most likely she would have completed her conquest had not an unforeseen circumstance occurred which brought to the knowledge of both Paul and his mother a very disfiguring trait in Kate's character.

They had neared a pretty little cottage just out of the village, when they overtook and stopped to speak to Uncle Phil. The usual greeting had scarcely passed, when sounds of grief were heard through the open windows of the cottage. Another moment, and the door opened, and Dora ran out. Seeing Uncle Phil, who started towards her, she cried out:

"I'm alone now, Uncle Phil! Grandmother has left me."

Uncle Phil caught her in his arms, held her tenderly for a moment, then, seeing how quiet she was, he looked anxiously at her, and exclaimed:

"Bless me, the child's dead herself, I believe!"

This exclamation brought Paul immediately to Dora's side, and he said:

"No, sir; not so bad as that. But she has fainted."

"Poor little dear! she has grown so weak, from confinement to the sick-room, she has no strength left to bear the grief of parting with her only relative," said Uncle Phil.

Kate was annoyed that Paul should be drawn from her side thus, and she saw how much he seemed interested in Dora. So, forgetting herself, she said:

"I do not see why she should go on so. I should think she would feel relieved of a great burden."

Being released from humouring the whims of an exacting old woman is nothing to grieve about."

This heartless remark reached the ears of both mother and son. An anxious expression was in the former's eyes as they sought Paul's. His plainly told that the spell was broken. He was free again. All Kate's power had suddenly passed away. He waited until Dora was fully restored to consciousness, and kindly cared for by the sympathising neighbours who had gathered about her. During the ride home Kate saw too plainly she had ceased to possess any charms for Paul Revere, and deeply she regretted the great mistake she had made.

That evening Uncle Phil called at Marm Haven's, to get her assistance in some kindness for Dora, and while there he told of the good girl's long and untiring devotion to her sick grandmother. Mrs. Revere was deeply interested, and declared her intention of calling with Marm Haven in the morning. So she did many times after when Dora had been claimed by Uncle Phil, and taken to his home, where another old lady, Uncle Phil's sister, gladly welcomed her.

Paul always went with his mother, and sometimes, which grew to be often, without her. Of course at first he pitied the poor little orphan, and was endeavouring to cheer her. We all know how near akin pity is to love. Very soon Paul knew it too. For Dora had grown dearer to him than all the world, excepting his mother. The idea of going from the village and leaving her behind made him very miserable.

So, after a confidential little chat with Uncle Phil, Paul sought Dora, told his love, and won the sweet girl's promise to be his. So, when Paul returned to his home a few days after, he was as happy a fellow as ever lived. He had heard his mother, when she kissed Dora at parting, call her "my daughter." He knew the time of separation would be short, then Dora would be all his own.

Early in the autumn the little village was the scene of a double wedding; Madge and Peyton Marsden, Dora and Paul being the happy couples. Uncle Phil gave the brides away, and Rose and Ada acted as bridesmaids and accompanied them on their wedding tour.

When, after their return, they visited Paul and Dora in their home, Rose met the hero of her dreams, and Ada so bewitched a rising young lawyer that he followed her home, and the village is likely to witness another double wedding before long. Kate has gone away as she threatened, and is trying her luck in a more advantageous quarter.

Uncle Phil, when speaking of the union of Dora and Paul the evening of the wedding, said to Marm Haven:

"I tell you that beauty and wealth don't avail much unless the heart is all right. Ah, there is in a pure, loving nature a beauty that never fails, and wealth that will never grow less." F. H. B.

THE LORD GREAT CHAMBERLAINSHIP.—The abeyance of the barony of Willoughby D'Eresby having been terminated by admitting the Right Hon. Clementina Elizabeth, Dowager Lady Aveland, as senior co-heiress to the enjoyment of that dignity, the Lord Great Chamberlainship will be now held solely by her ladyship, which will be performed by her deputy, Lord Aveland. The Lord Great Chamberlainship will continue in the D'Eresby family during the reign of her present Majesty, when it will pass into the Cholmondeley family, the two families holding the office jointly.

BRIDAL PRESENTS.—If brides could only hear the conversations that are held over the "bridal presents" by the givers! Their weary yawns while pondering how much must be expended and how little may, and wishing heartily the whole system were exploded in favour of their pockets. If brides could hear this they would quietly and with dignity announce, "No presents received," even without any reservations as to relationship. It is of no use talking of the "good old days" we suppose; as well might one ask a confirmed epicure to abjure his cayenne and highly spiced diet for plain, wholesome, nutritious food; so, with a passing sigh for the days when sentiment, modesty, and economy had not yet gone out of fashion, we give it up.

The Emperor of Brazil, now in England, is the male representative of the Braganzas of Portugal, one of whom was the neglected wife of our Charles II. His elder sister, Maria da Gloria, was only seven years of age, and he only one, when a political and family arrangement placed her on the ancestral throne. Don Pedro succeeded his father Don Pedro I., Emperor of Brazil, in 1834, and he is therefore of longer standing as a sovereign than any of his European cousins. Queen Victoria is the oldest in Europe; she came to the throne in 1837; the Pope comes next, if he can be called a sovereign now; he was elected in 1846. Francis Joseph of Austria is third in order, having succeeded on the abdication of his uncle Ferdinand in 1848. The

King of Holland, 1849, is fourth; and the Emperor Napoleon III., elected in 1852, would be the fifth, were it not for his present "retirement from business," and his place is occupied by the King of Saxony, who succeeded on the death of his elder brother in 1854.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MOAT.

CHAPTER XIX.

I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart,
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.
Moore.

LADY MARIAN sank down upon one of the library sofas and hid her face in her hands.

She dared not look upon the earl as he stood there before her, stately, stern, very handsome, yet with a pallor on his cheek and a look of anger in his dark blue eyes that had never been there before—for her.

She dared not look at him, for her very heart had melted within her at the sound of the familiar voice—at the sight of the dear and unforgotten face.

She loved him! He was the husband of another woman, and he had cruelly deceived and wronged her; yet she loved him!

But for the chance kindness of a total stranger, she might, this day, have been his companion—beloved, very possibly, but surely not happy in that ruined and degraded state. Yet, in spite of all these memories, she loved him!

Wicked, weak, and feeble as she was, but one thing remained for her—to leave him as speedily as possible, and never, while life should last, listen to that beloved voice or gaze upon the fatal, bewildering beauty of that face and form again.

Hating and despising herself for what she deemed her sinful yielding to his impetuous will, she waited to hear what he would dare to say, to make one brief and withering reply, then leave him for ever.

His first proceeding startled her.

He crossed the room and locked the door.

Then he turned towards her.

"Now, Lady Marian, you must tell me what all this means. I told you, at the Moat, that I could forgive anything and everything, except deceit. What has your conduct been from the beginning to the end? In the place of telling me who and what you really were, you leave me to learn from the public prints—long after our marriage and your flight—the true story of your birth and life. Had you been frank with me, I would have loved and guarded you as a sister. The marriage which I proposed would not, of course, have been a fitting one for the Lady Marian Powis, but I believed that I was wedding a poor and humble girl, who, in return for the rank and wealth I bestowed upon her, would give me at least some portion of her heart. On our wedding-day I left you, but every mile that separated us seemed to rest like a millstone on my heart. At last I could bear it no longer. I sent on to London my written instructions regarding the business in hand, and availed myself of a returning train to hurry back to the Moat and to you.

"I reached the place late at night. I sought your chamber when the house was still. I found no one there, Marian. But Mrs. Caryl, having heard my movements, came to me with a note you had left, and told me that in an unguarded hour she had left the door of the western wing unlocked, and that you had taken advantage of the circumstance to penetrate to the Crimson Room.

"She added that, when she found you there, and threatened to report your conduct to me, you fled in company with Jeanette, leaving that note for me.

"Marian, how my heart bled I can never tell you! I sought you far and near, but all in vain. Then I went abroad, for home was no longer home to me. Summoned back by the tidings of my cousin's death, I return to find you here—his acknowledged daughter, and the heiress of all his wealth.

"Marian, had he lived I should have asked you, in his presence—in spite of the past—the questions I ask you now.

"Why did you break your pledged word to me, and enter the Crimson Room? Oh!—far above all else—why were you silent as to the real story of your birth? Why did you impose upon me with that false tale, and gain my heart by your feigned love and tenderness, only to break it when the truth was known?

"It was no feigned love that I gave you in return! Every hope and dream that life had left me were fixed upon you alone! It was more than love that I felt for you—it was the worship that only a man of my age can feel when so bright a vision dawns upon his lonely, saddened life, and seems again to give him the youth, the beauty, and the tenderness that he thought for ever lost.

"You have destroyed my last illusion, Marian—you have killed my last, my sweetest, and my dearest

hope. Again I ask—what reason had you for this? How had I ever injured you, that you should wound and grieve me so?"

Lady Marian had listened to him in astonished silence at first, that gradually changed and deepened into a happy hope.

Would a heartless deceiver—such as she had been forced to believe him, in spite of the yearnings of her own sad heart—accuse her like this? If he had really wronged her, as they said, would he dare to stand before her, there in her dead father's house, and speak of the past like this?

She rose from the sofa and looked at him.

The blue eyes looked at her with the same stern glance at first. Then it softened, and the eyes themselves were dim with tears.

"Oh, if you had only loved me," he said, turning away, and dashing the tell-tale drops from his eyes with an impatient gesture. "If you had only loved me I could forgive you, even yet, and be the happiest man on earth. Was it well done, to deceive me so deeply in this?"

"Stephen, answer me one question," she said, in a trembling voice. "Answer it as if you stood before my dead father—or before Heaven."

"What is it?" he asked, without looking at her.

"Am I your wife?"

He turned suddenly, with a glance of utter astonishment.

"My wife? Whose else should you be? Of course you are my wife. Yes," he added, almost savagely; "you cannot blot that out, with all your treachery. You are mine, Marian. I can claim you at any hour of the day or night I choose, and you must come to me. What hinders me from claiming you now—beautiful as you are?"

He caught her hand as he spoke, regarding her with a fierce, passionate gaze that seemed to scorch her cheek. Then the fire faded from his eyes, and he threw the hand aside.

"No," he said, mournfully; "I might claim you—I might make you mine. But what would it all avail me? It is your love that I want, Marian, as well as you. You never gave it me, and it is worse than folly to hope for it now. Have no fear of me. I will never hold you to your bargain. The law shall soon set you free."

"Stephen, I believe you—I trust you—I love you—and with my own consent I will never be set free," said the sweet voice.

Two soft white arms were around his neck, and a soft, warm cheek was laid against his own before he knew what he was doing.

"Love me! You really love me?" he said, hoarsely, bending back his head to catch a glimpse of her face. "For Heaven's sake don't trifle with me now. I'm a desperate man. I'll kill you if you wrong me now!" he muttered, savagely, between his teeth.

"You may—you may!" she said, clinging to him fearlessly, and lifting her sweet lips to his. "Oh, Stephen—my love—my own dear husband! Sit down here beside me, and listen to what I have to say. But kiss me first, and say again that I am really your wife, and that you love me!"

"My wife! my wife! and I love you as no man ever loved woman before—Heaven help me!" he said, clasping her fiercely to his heart, and raining mad kisses upon her lips, her cheeks, her hands, and hair.

Tenderly and gently she drew him down beside her on the sofa, and pillowed the proud head upon her breast.

"My own dear husband, whom I feared and fled from and distrusted, but never deceived!" she said, softly. "Oh, my darling! life ought to be long as it shall be sweet, in order that I may atone for all you have suffered through me!"

A heavy sob broke from his lips, and, flinging his arms around her, he wept like a child. The agony of desertion he had borne in silent pride; the sudden joy of knowing that he was beloved in spite of all was more than he could bear.

"Stephen, listen to me!" she said, when he had grown calm. "Before I utter one word of explanation, let me tell you, over and over again, that I love you—oh, better, far better, I am sure, than you can love a weak and faulty creature like myself. You are so noble, so strong, so grand, so lifted up above all the petty weaknesses of earth—even your faults are glorious, like yourself. There is nothing about you that I do not honour and admire. Then you are so handsome, my husband!" she added, parting the bright brown hair from his brow, and looking at him with eyes of adoring love. "It may be a weakness on my part to worship beauty so, but I cannot help it, and I rejoice in your strength, your vigour, the harmonious contour of your face and form, the noble, majestic air which won my eye and heart when first I saw you. Stephen, since we parted I have seen other men—younger than yourself; but, oh, never to

be compared with you! There is no one like my own dear husband—no, not one!"

He hushed her with a kiss.

"Beautiful flatterer that you are! Yet, my darling, it is not all vanity that makes me happy when you speak like this. If ever you reach my age, dear child, and love something far brighter and fairer and younger than yourself, you will understand my feelings better than you can now. Oh, my Marian, to think that after the weary months of misery and pain, I can sit beside you, hear you say that you love me! I do not deserve it, unless it be the reward of my faithful love for you."

"You must not love me too well yet; you have not heard my story."

"What matters it? What need of another word, since I have found that which I believed to be a mad, wild dream of happiness is real? I have you, my darling, here in my arms. Let the rest all go."

"But it must not go—you must hear me!"

Then, imprisoning the restless hand that was for ever seeking hers, she told the tale.

The earl listened in silence. At the end he sprang to his feet, his face dark with wrath.

"I see it all, my Marian. I see it all now. But for my cousin's death I might never have found you again. My darling, a part of the story was false and a part was true. But as for Lady Alice—your mother, dear child—she was the purest and best of Heaven's creatures. I admired her, it is true. I even loved her, with a boy's love, and my imprudence caused her much sorrow in the end. But I swear here, in the presence of Heaven, that no word of love for her ever passed my lips. She would have banished me from her presence had I ventured to speak. No, darling, love your mother tenderly, she was worthy of it, and your father must have felt the truth of this or he would never have acknowledged you upon his dying bed. Had he lived, and had I known of your return to him, we too might also have been reconciled. But he knows the truth now, and let us hope his blessing may rest upon the marriage of his only child."

He was silent for a time. Then he took her hand, and pressed his lips tenderly upon the bridal ring. "You did not take it off, my darling?"

"No, Stephen. It will never leave my hand in life."

"I will put another there to guard it, love. For we must be married publicly now. Your position and my own demand it. It shall be very, very soon. But first, if you really love and trust me—if you believe yourself to be my wife—as, in the presence of Heaven, I swear that you are—grant me one favour, Marian; do one thing for me."

"What is it, Stephen?"

"Go with me to the Moat. I can end this story only there. I can give my explanations only under that roof. There all shall be made clear and plain to you. Will you trust yourself with me, my darling? Will you go?"

"When?"

"This very afternoon."

"Is Madame Laroche to go?"

"No; nor Jeanette. No one is to know till the object of our journey is accomplished—till the last taint of suspicion is banished from your heart. You see it is a sacrifice I ask of you, my love. Can you trust me sufficiently to make it?"

She looked up into the dark blue eyes bent so piercingly upon her. A whole world of love was in her gaze.

"Stephen, I love and honour you above all other men on earth. You are my own dear husband. Why should I not trust myself with you? I will go!"

"My precious wife."

He clasped her in his arms, and bent his face upon her own, and again the proud blue eyes were wet with happy tears.

CHAPTER XX.

Oh, two such silver currents, when they join,
Do glorify the banks that bind them in.
King John.

Was she wise in trusting him thus far? Nay, to a woman who really loves with her whole heart and soul, is not that love but another name for faith—faith absolute and unquestioning, which would risk life, and the honour which is more than life, upon the truth and goodness of the one beloved?

Madame Laroche remonstrated, in vague alarm, when she heard that she was not to accompany her young mistress to the Moat. Even Jeanette shook her head—vague reports of Sir Stephen's former mode of life having been current among the domestics of his house.

"And his being an earl may make no difference in him," the girl suggested to the anxious Frenchwoman, who was trying in vain to shake the determination of her wilful charge.

"Difference! Of course not—but don't talk to me,

Jeanette," wailed the poor soul. "I know not what to do or say!"

She sent for Mr. Thornton in her desperation, and the answer came back from the clerk at his chambers that he had gone out of town to draw up a will for a dying client, and would not return before the evening of the next day.

"Much good that will do," said madame, exasperated. "He is like every other man—never present when he is really wanted—for ever beside you when you wish him far away."

Which, to say the least, was rather hard and unjust so far as the poor solicitor was concerned.

Meanwhile the day wore rapidly away, and at three o'clock in the afternoon a close carriage stood before the door of the Park Lane residence, and the earl was ready for his bride.

Trembling with emotion, Madame Laroche ventured on a last appeal to him as he stood in the hall waiting for Lady Marian to appear. He would not enter the drawing-room—there was no time, he said; so she was obliged to banish the porter and the two footmen for a few moments, and speak then and there.

She had not gone far in her remonstrance when the keen blue eyes were turned upon her with so stern a glance that the words died upon her lips.

"Afraid to trust Lady Marian in my care!" he said, in a haughty way that made the poor woman shrink and tremble before him. "Madame, she is my wife! I do not understand you!"

Madame fell back a step or two, and said no more. Down the wide marble staircase came Lady Marian, dressed in a travelling suit of silver-gray. Her sweet face lit with a smile and a blush as she saw the earl standing in the hall, with his hat off, to receive her.

"Farewell, dear Lucille, for a little time," she whispered as she kissed her friend. "How can you have any fear for me, good and noble as he is?"

"Are you quite ready, my darling?" said the earl.

Madame, looking up to see how the blue eyes grew soft and tender as they turned upon Lady Marian no longer wondered at the girl's infatuation.

"For when he looks like that he is indeed handsome as a star," she said afterwards to Jeanette as they sat together over their confidential tea. "It was not like the glance he gave to me. His heart was in his eyes when they rested on her. Ah! but it is easy to see that they love one another well, in spite of the difference in their years."

"Are you ready, love?" asked the earl again.

"Quite ready."

He took her hand. Madame stood there beside them; Jeanette hovered timidly in the background; the porter and the two footmen were in attendance again at the door.

"We shall not be absent long, Madame Laroche," said the earl, in a clear, distinct voice that every one heard. "You will prepare suitable rooms for the reception of the countess and myself against our return."

Then past the staring, wondering servants he led his sweet young wife, and, handing her into the waiting carriage, he took his seat beside her, drew down the rose-coloured blinds, and held her fondly to his heart as they dashed away on the first stage of what was indeed their bridal tour.

Yet, in spite of this announcement to the servants, the manner of the earl was singularly deferential to his bride. His attentions through the rapid journey by rail were constant, but delicate; and, though he seemed ever studious of her comfort, he claimed from her no look, word, or caress, fonder than those which a daughter might have given to a father whom she dearly loved. So they reached the first station on their journey—a great cathedral town where the earl proposed to spend the night.

They travelled *incognito*, and no one at the old-fashioned hotel where they stopped had the least idea of the rank of the distinguished-looking guests, or the peculiar relation in which they stood to each other. Dinner was served for them in their own rooms, and after dessert was over the earl rose from his chair, kissed his bride tenderly and bade her good-night. She saw him no more till the cathedral bells chimed eight on the following morning, and a smiling maid-servant, with a knot of white ribbon pinned in the bosom of her new gown, came to wake her, with a note from the earl.

"Put off your mourning for this day, my darling, and come to me as soon as you can. We are to be married here in the cathedral, before we resume our journey."

Thus ran the note, and Lady Marian sat startled and confused, gazing on it.

"If your ladyship pleases, I have been a lady's-maid, and shall be very glad to assist your ladyship," said the smart chambermaid, with a rosy smile. "My lord sent me, and the breakfast is being laid out below, and the cathedral is already open, if your ladyship pleases."

A few more words, and the smart chambermaid was on her knees before one of the great trunks.

Half an hour later, Lady Marian, wearing a lovely dress of plain white silk and a lace veil that fell in costly folds to the very floor, entered the room where the earl awaited her.

The earl advanced to meet her, and took her to his heart—a fiery impatience looking from his deep blue eyes.

"Marian, will you trust me still? Will you give me this little hand once more, in public, even before I have cleared up to your satisfaction the mystery of the Crimson Room?"

"I will do anything you ask of me, Stephen," she answered, with a sweet, shy smile.

"Then come, for my heart is sick with the delay! You must be mine, and all the world shall know that I claim you," he answered, clasping her hand in his as he led her down the stairs and through the wide hall, where groups of servants bowed low before the lovely bride.

To Marian it was all like a dream. The rapid drive to the cathedral; the few who were in the secret waiting eagerly there; the venerable face and form of the stately bishop; the grave, yet admiring look of the reverend dean who took the place of her dead father and gave her away; the solemn ceremony; and the bells that burst out ringing so joyously as they came into the bright outer world again. She only woke to know that all was real when in the quiet of their little parson, and she glanced down upon the diamond guard that now shone over the bridal ring, and felt her husband's arm around her and her husband's kiss upon her lips.

"Mine now—for ever mine—in spite of all that the world can say or do!" he cried, exultantly. "I did not mean this to happen till I had told you all, my Marian, but after what Madame Laroche said to me yesterday I began to fear that I was harassing you by the delay, and my own heart yearned and hungered to hold you beyond the possibility of change. Now, come what may, you are the Countess of Marisvayle, and I am a happy man!"

"The first bridal seemed enough, Stephen," she said, with a smile.

"Ay—to you and to me, and in the sight of Heaven, my darling! I do not hold you more truly my wife now than I did then, but the world may."

Then they sat down to eat their wedding-breakfast, which the proud and flattered host had extemporised in a manner that did him and the resources of his house infinite credit. They were alone—they loved each other truly and tenderly—and they were happy! "Oh, pretty page, with the dimpled chin that never has felt the barber's shear," fancy not, in the innocence of youth, that you can love as loved this man of fifty—who in the shade of years saw all his early hopes and dreams revive, and bloom far more brightly than they had in earlier days! Oh, graceful bride, looking into the eyes of your boy-husband, believe not that you have touched the height and depth of happiness which this other bride knew, in giving her youth and beauty and innocence to brighten the life which, but for her, must have been dark and lonely to the end. This was a true marriage—a joining of hearts and souls as well as of hands. Alas! few of us are worthy to look upon a bliss so tender and so pure! Let the veil drop that hides it from our troubled, worldly eyes.

CHAPTER XXI.

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above:
For Love is Heaven, and Heaven is Love.

Walter Scott.

The wedding vows thus said afresh, and his young bride all his own in the sight of the whole world, the Earl of Marisvayle suddenly changed his plans, and in the place of going directly to the Moat announced his intention of making a bridal tour.

"When, where, and how you please, my little countess," he said, playfully; "only let it be before we enter that house which has been one of evil omen to me ever since my dear mother died within its walls. It is a sad story that I must tell you there—it is a web of treachery and deceit that I must unravel—it is the guilty I must punish—when the dark shadow of the Crimson Room falls over our united lives again. I may be morbidly superstitious and fanciful, but I dread that return—I dread it inexpressibly, and grow a very coward when I think of it. Marian, my darling, do not let us cloud the first hours of our bridal by any story or even thought of guilt and wrong. Let us take our happiness first, then let the suffering and the retribution fall upon the wrong-doer afterwards. We shall love each other fondly till life is over—I feel it and know it well. But in these first fond days of unrestrained affection there is a sweetness and a freshness that will come to us but once on earth. Shall it be as I say, my darling?"

"Just as you say—now and always, Stephen," was the quick reply.

So, shunning all the haunts of fashion, they went down together into the depths of the New Forest—to the home of the kind Emily, and her bright-faced aunt—who greeted the young countess with all the gladness of former years, tempered a little by the memory of their own loss and her aggrandisement.

"Oh, my poor sister would have been proud and glad to see this day," said cordial Aunt Elizabeth Moore, wiping away her tears. "Little we thought when your poor mother died here nineteen years ago—little we thought, as we called you by my last name, according to her request, of how you would relinquish that name and come to your own again. And Emily has a box of papers for you which my poor, dear sister left—your mother's marriage certificate and settlements, and the register of your birth. You will need to prove nothing by them now since my lord acknowledged you publicly before his death. But you may like to have them all the same."

"Yes, I would like to have them. Many thanks for your care," said the countess, thoughtfully.

These simple cottagers, living far away from the great world, and rarely seeing a newspaper of any kind, knew nothing of the romantic story with which all London had lately been made familiar. Sir Stephen had never written to them from London, as he had promised and intended to do, and they still believed that, at the time of the railway accident, Lady Marian had been recognised and claimed by her father, who was also a passenger in the train. Neither she nor the earl cared to undeceive them. What did it matter now?

Uncle Mark and Aunt Lisbeth were "well-to-do" farmers, lifted above the sphere of actual want, and so entirely contented with themselves and their surroundings that it was a hard matter for Marian to discover a way by which she could benefit them without at the same time wounding their pride. Chance, at last, enabled her to solve the enigma in a graceful and touching way. Their only son, and only child, was about to wed his cousin Emily, and the countess, in presenting the trousseau of the bride, besought them also to accept the choice stock which the earl had ordered to be sent on from his model farm at Marisvayle—a gift which sent the ambitious young farmer into paroxysms of delight. On Emily, and her heirs for ever, was also settled the Norwood cottage, which had been her mother's home. And when, some months after the sojourn of the noble pair in the forest, a stately marble monument was brought from London, in charge of two experienced workmen, and erected over the humble grave of the late Countess of Marisvayle, a smaller but equally beautiful stone was also placed, by Marian's orders, over the grave of her foster-mother; and thus the unspoken wish of the lonely sister's heart was fulfilled.

Followed by thanks and blessings from the simple hearts that loved them, the noble pair left the New Forest at the expiration of the legitimate "honeymoon," and went direct to Powisland, in Wales.

Here Marian found a gray and stately ruin, overgrown with ivy, and by its side a handsome modern mansion, replete with every luxury and convenience. The wild hills of Wales rose in the background, but on every side smiled peaceful hillsides and valleys covered over with flocks and herds, and dotted here and there by the white walls of happy cottage homes. The wild, romantic scenery and the primitive customs and manners of the peasantry delighted and charmed her; and here, she said, should be her home, if her husband so pleased.

He smiled tenderly upon her. Day by day she was growing nearer and dearer to him, and he only lived to study her wishes and to fulfil her commands.

"You feel as my dear mother used to feel," he said. "Powisland was always her favourite residence. I have seen many a happy hour here, my darling, and, thanks to Heaven, I hope to see many more, in your dear society. You shall live here if you like. But, first, justice must be done, and we must return to the Moat for a time."

His brow clouded as he spoke, and his face grew grave and stern. Out of the dream of love and happiness in which he had been living for many weeks, it was irksome to look upon the record of guilt and crime. But there was no help for it. Leaving orders with the housekeeper of Powisland to engage a full staff of servants, and have all things ready for their return, they left Wales, and on the evening of the second day afterwards were driving in a post-chaise down the long avenue of chestnut trees that led towards the Moat.

They were not expected by the inmates of the house, and therefore it was not strange that the lodge gate was open, and the tenant of the lodge absent, as they drove by. Half-way up the avenue they saw a carriage coming swiftly towards them. It was the gig of the village physician, who drew up abruptly as he recognised the earl.

"Beg pardon, Sir Stephen—that is, my lord," he said. "Has your lordship returned in consequence of the accident?"

"What accident, Seton?"

"Oh, I thought your lordship knew. The housekeeper, Mrs. Caryl, my lord—"

"What of her?"

"She will not live the night through, my lord."

"Stay. Go back with me, Seton; I may want you. What is amiss?"

"The—the mad lady, my lord," began the physician, deprecatingly.

The earl started.

"What of her? Speak out, man!" he cried, with a sudden impatient flash of the deep blue eyes.

"My lord, it seems that she has had a grudge against the housekeeper for some time past, and the nurse warned Mrs. Caryl of it, but she would enter the Crimson Room all the same. This afternoon she was there. The mad lady had managed to secure a knife—the nurse cannot say when or how—and she flung herself suddenly upon the housekeeper, and stabbed her, before the nurse could separate them. The nurse, Mrs. Stone, screamed for help, but it was some time before any one came; and when they did the mad lady had stabbed herself to the heart, and Mrs. Caryl was almost dead. She will not last the night through, in my opinion."

"And Lady Powis?" said the earl, drawing the white face of Marian gently to his breast.

"Beg pardon, my lord—who did you say?" stammered the little doctor.

"Lady Powis. She was the wife of my brother John, and has been insane for years."

"Oh!"

The doctor's face, as he heard this explanation, wore a contented look, as if a suspicion unfavourable to the earl had been lifted from his mind.

"Will she live?"

"She? I thought your lordship understood me. She stabbed herself to the heart, my lord, and died almost instantly."

"Then one tempest-tossed soul more is safe at last in Heaven!" said the earl, in a reverent tone.

"Seton—"

"Yes, my lord."

"Oblige me by returning, if you can do so."

"Certainly, my lord."

He waited till the post-chaise had passed, then followed it.

Marian crept closer to her husband, and her hand stole softly round his neck.

"Stephen, I see it all now. Forgive me that I ever doubted you for a single moment. Forgive me for entering the Crimson Room."

He bent his proud head and kissed her tenderly. "My darling, I forgive you long ago—and you have made ample atonement since by your unshaken trust in me. Remember, as I always shall, my darling, that you gave yourself to me before this sad secret had been revealed. You were mine long before you knew the real history of the tenant of the Crimson Room. It is not every woman who would have trusted me like this, where rank and title, and, above all, the future of a noble line were all at stake."

"Ah, who that knew you as I know you could help loving and trusting you as I have done?" she said, with an adoring glance.

"Little flatterer," he answered. Then he grew grave again. "It is a sad, sad story. My brother saw her in France, and married her for her beauty alone, not because he loved her. They were both very young, and she—loved another. The truth came out at last. I was too hard upon her, I fear, poor soul; but when I read those fond letters, written to her by the dead Eugene, I felt that the honour of our ancient house was at stake; I was fearfully angry, and I was younger then, and knew less how to forgive than I now know, thanks to you and the happiness you have given me, my darling. Between my harshness and John's cruelty—for it was little less—and Eugene's death, her mind, which was never strong, gave way. I repeated then of my share in the work, but it was too late. The best I could then do to atone for it was to give her a home in my own house after my brother's death, and hide her and her story from the world. She always hated me—no wonder you will say. The mere thought of her presence made the Moat no longer a home for me. I was for ever asking myself how far I was to blame for that ruined, wasted life."

"When I offered the shelter of that home to you I began to fear some outbreak on her part, such as has now occurred. But it seemed to me, if such a thing should happen, that I alone should be the victim. Yet, to guard you against the possibility of any such danger, I gave you that charge about entering the western wing."

"And she would have harmed you—murdered you, possibly, when she sprang upon you that day—but for those two women. Now one guilty soul goes to give up its account, through her, and she is at rest! Guilty! Nay, what right have I to judge? I—who have been a wicked and sinful man, till you, sweet angel that you are—"

She hushed him with a kiss.

"Never speak of yourself like that again," she



[MADAME'S FEARS.]

said, gravely. "I cannot bear it. To me you are all that is good and honourable and great."

"Ah! if I were but worthy all this love," he thought, sadly.

But he said no more.

Straight to the chamber of the dying woman they went when they reached the Moat. The nurse, Mrs. Stone, was beside her, for all watching was over in the western wing, and the silent tenant of the Crimson Room was lying like a statue upon her silken couch, with the miniature and letters of the dead Eugene upon her quiet breast.

Mrs. Caryl, pale and feeble, looked up from her pillows with a glance of pain and anguish as the doctor entered the apartment, followed by the countess and the earl.

"You are here, and together, in spite of all that I have said and done to part you!" she gasped. "Well, Heaven is just!"

"Yes—Heaven is just! And you are punished! Speak, woman, even on your dying bed," said the earl, sternly. "Say why you uttered the falsehood that parted us two so long. Why did you take Lady Marian to the Crimson Room? Why did you tell her that my brother's wife was my own wife? How have I ever injured you that you should work me such a deadly wrong?"

A faint colour flushed the pale cheek of the dying woman, her large dark eyes grew soft and mild, and lingered on his face with a look that made her seem ten years younger.

"Why? Sir Stephen, are you still so blind? Because, during all the long years I spent in your service—I loved you! Poor and obscure as I was, I could not see your glorious beauty unmoved! You were all that my heart longed for and desired—and though I had no hope of winning you myself, I was determined that neither she nor any other should do so! Falsehood! I would have steeped my very soul in falsehood if by so doing I could have won you for myself—or kept you from another! My heart died within me when I saw you kneel by her side in the ruined chapel of the abbey. I knew no other way to snatch her from you than the one I took. You can afford to forgive me, since your fate has been stronger than I, and since you are together and happy now!"

"It has been my death, too. For, from that day, Lady Powis turned her hate upon me—from the day when I took that young girl there with the bridal ring upon her hand. That day I signed my own death-warrant, although I knew it not!"

"Ah, Sir Stephen—my lord—forgive me—and you, too, my lady," she said, feebly, turning her darkening eyes towards the countess. "It was because I loved him so! How could I help it? I saw him—

handsome as the gods of old—and gallant, gay, and genial—oh, child, with all your love for him, can you surpass mine, think you?—poor, plain, and despised servant to him though I was!"

She sank back upon her pillows exhausted. The nurse sat gazing at her like one struck dumb with astonishment at her presumption. But the earl looked kindly down into her pale face, his blue eyes full of a troubled pity. Strange as the avowal might sound in the ears of others, it was not in his nature, as a man, to hear it quite unmoved.

Marian broke the silence. Bending down over the dying woman, she said, in a gentle voice:

"We both forgive you. Is there anything that can be done now to make your dying hour more easy?"

"One thing," gasped the failing voice. "Let me hear him say it. His hand."

The earl's hand trembled as it touched her arm. "I forgive you, with all my heart," he said, bending down over her. "May Heaven also forgive and have mercy upon you in the world to come."

The dull eyes brightened once more as they met his gaze. The cold hand clasped and raised his own, till the pale lips rested on it in a dying kiss. Then there was a long, long sigh, the hand dropped, and with a faint smile the head sank back again, and she was dead.

* * * * *

What more is there to tell, dear reader?

The double funeral over, the Moat was closed by its owner and left in the care of a housekeeper, who, with her married son and daughter, remained in the eastern wing to keep the place in order.

The earl and countess returned to Marisvayle House in London, and for a time shone in that society to which they both had a rightful claim.

But Marian longed ever and always for the quiet and seclusion of the country. The great world had nothing to give her which she was willing to exchange for her pleasant frsided evenings with the husband whom she held so dear. The titled fops who approached her in society, secure in their own power to please and in her position as the young wife of one whom they described as "an old man," were thunderstruck at finding that her soft gray eyes looked over and through and above them, only to hang on every movement that "the old man" made with a loving devotion which they were wholly at a loss to understand. The fashionable ladies, given over to dress and flirting, called her a simpleton, because her chief care was to please her husband, her chief study how to keep the heart she had so strangely won.

One and all agreed that she must certainly be mad to cherish such an absurd infatuation, an opinion which the earl overheard at last, and, re-

peating it to her, she laughed gaily, yet with a suspicious moisture in her eyes the while.

"Old do they call you!" she said, indignantly. "Old—with these rich brown locks, these bright blue eyes, this majestically beautiful face, which time has never had the heart to spoil! Show me one among them all who is your equal in strength of body and vigour of intellect. Show me one so handsome, so eager, so hopeful, so young at heart, and indeed I will give them leave to call you old!"

"For all that, my sweetest wife, we cannot hide the fact from them, or from ourselves, that I am fifty—nay, nearly fifty-two!—and that you are just nineteen!" he said, with a sigh. "I shall be first to go, my dearest."

"Don't—don't say the word!" she cried.

Flinging her arms around him as if she would hold him back from the grasp of time and of death itself, she burst into a passion of tears.

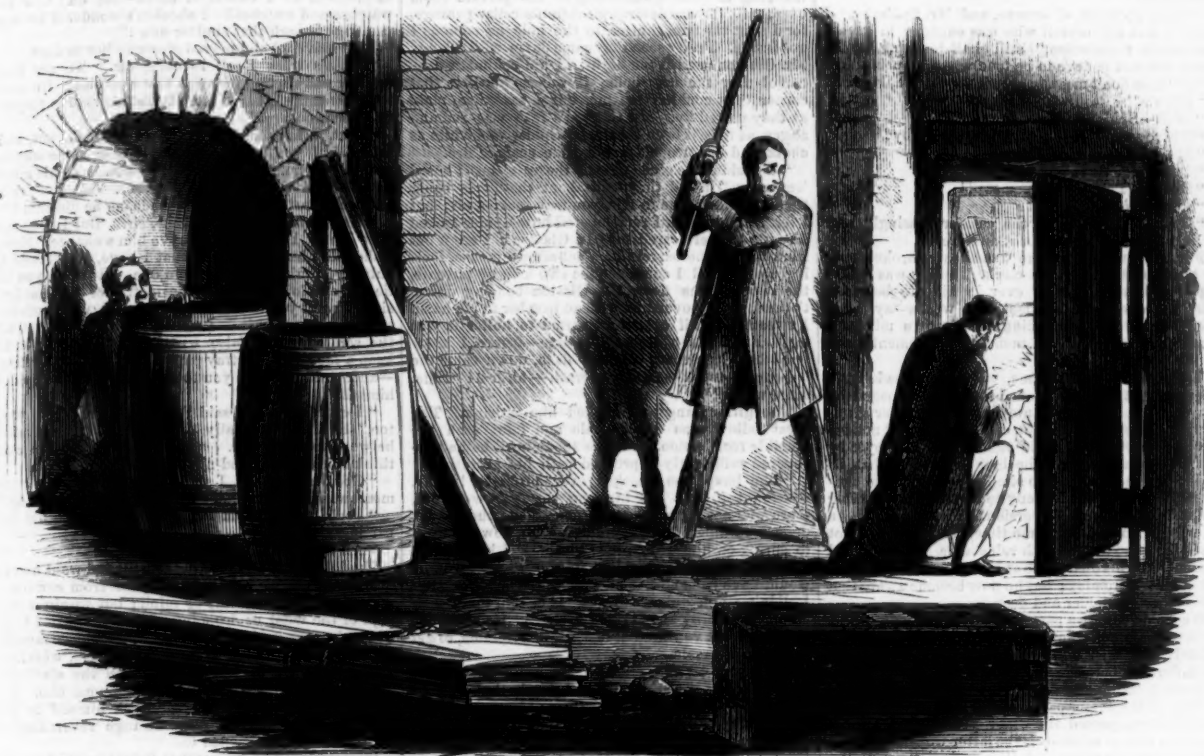
She loves him still, as fondly as she loved him on that first wedding-day. The years that come and go have never found the power to change her faithful heart, although they have touched his bright brown locks with a thread of silver here and there, and left a faint furrow or two upon his noble brow. She does not see these changes, for she will not see them. With two beautiful children growing up beside them, her first thought is still only of her noble husband; his lightest look or word is far dearer even than the cooing voices of her boy and girl. Once in a lifetime, possibly—but surely not often—each man may be loved like this. The earl is wise enough to value this pure affection, and to return it with all the force and freshness of his ardent, impetuous heart.

Their home, whether at Marisvayle or Powisland, is over a happy one. If the countess is but seldom seen in the resorts of the fashionable world, the light of her sunny countenance and happy heart the oftener enlivens the dear home circle where she reigns an honoured queen.

Jeanette remained with her mistress till her own marriage. Madame Laroche had shared the home of the countess year after year as governess and companion to the little Viscount Powis, and the baby Lady Stephanie. The faithful Jones makes one of the household as coachman, and his wife and daughters keep the rustic lodge at the park gates of Powisland.

The mystery of the Crimson Room is at an end. Peaceful and at rest, Marian dwells in the light of her husband's faithful love, her one prayer being that their death hour and their grave may be the same. To that prayer we say Amen! How could she linger here on earth without him?

THE END.



[THE HIDDEN WITNESS.]

THROUGH DARKNESS TO DAWN.

CHAPTER VII.

I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine. *Hamlet.*

"ALL this," said Treddle, after a pause, "much as it interests and surprises me, does not explain the cause of your untimely laughter this afternoon in the cemetery. You promised to explain that, and it's now after nine o'clock. I must be going soon."

Then, turning to Mrs. Cooper, he said, with his bright smile:

"After your experience, ma'am, with a man such as Mr. Spiderby seems to be, I'm afraid you'll be suspicious of me! Perhaps you and Miss Effie look on me with a doubtful eye. If so, I'd better not come again on any pretext."

"Oh, Mr. Treddle, as if we could compare you with him!" exclaimed the girl, dropping her hands in her lap, and turning round upon him with such a blush and smile as, had not his heart and thoughts been preoccupied, would have betrayed to him a danger in a new direction.

As it was, he returned her smile, bowing his acknowledgments of the implied high estimation in which he was held. The next moment she had resumed her sewing, but her fingers trembled and her thread knotted and broke, and altogether she made such confusing work of it that presently she laid it on the table with a sigh.

"Mother, I've made up my mind to take Mr. Treddle into our secret."

She looked across gravely at her son, who had ceased his grimaces and restless fidgeting, and was gazing seriously at her.

"I think you will act wisely in doing so," she said.

"Then, Mr. Treddle, you needn't be nowise uneasy because I speak before them," Peter said, waving his hand towards his mother and sister. "They know all I know; and, what's remarkable, considering their sex, they know enough to hold their tongues. Draw up close. Walls have ears, they say. I couldn't say what I've got to say out loud if I should try. The words stick in my throat, and it gets as dry as powder. I can't account for it, but that's the way it is. Sit up close, Mr. Treddle," he continued, his voice already sinking into a hoarse whisper, which thrilled Thomas in spite of himself,

and made his face a shade paler as he drew up to the awe-struck circle, over which a spell seemed suddenly to have fallen—even the red spot on Mrs. Cooper's high cheek-bones had faded out, and she looked at the door to be sure that it was closed.

"Mother, where's the Bible?"

"On the little stand, my son."

"Effie, please hand it over. Now, Mr. Treddle, no offence, but I want you to swear an oath on this 'ere holy book that you won't repeat one word of what I tell you till I give you leave."

"I don't like to bind myself," hesitated the listener.

"Natural enough. But in this case you must. I'm working up this case, and I must have my own way about it. I've long been considering about making you my partner; but you must swear not to let the cat out of the bag until I untie the string."

"If I must, I must," said Treddle, and he took the oath.

"Well, now you're bound, the first thing I've to make known to you is this: Mr. Glaston never committed suicide."

"How?"

"He was murdered!"

"Do you know what you are talking about?" asked Treddle, rising up and sitting down again.

"I know all about it that it's necessary to know."

There was a quarrel picked with him; he and the one that killed him went down to the vaults to look at some papers to settle the matter; then, when Mr. Glaston was on one knee before a safe, looking in after what he wanted, his enemy struck him on the back of the head with an iron bar that was used to fasten the cellar door, and killed him the second blow. The murderer hid the body in the big empty safe—you know the one, Mr. Treddle—looked it up, and kept it there two nights and days, sir. It was there, in that vault, while the whole town was dragging the river. Think of that! Think of the cunning! On the third night, when the search was over, at midnight, when all was as silent as the grave, the murderer went down into that dreadful place and opened the man-hole there, and dragged out his victim, sir, with weights in his pockets and to his feet, and dumped him into the river as if he'd been a barrel of ashes."

Peter's terrible whisper thrilled through the silent room. Treddle tried to shake off its impression—to disbelieve the statement of this strange fellow, who could really believe a thing like this and keep it to himself so long. Twice or thrice he essayed to speak before he could force out the words:

"How do you know all this?"

"I saw it."

"Saw it?"

"The most of it. I saw the blow struck and the body hidden. The third night I kept watch, for I guessed at the course to be taken. I saw the corpse taken out, as I told you, and dragged and thrown into the river. I wasn't two feet away when it was done."

Suddenly Treddle's whole expression changed; he drew away from the porter, who had been leaning almost over him—or, rather, he shrank away, with features livid with aversion and horror.

"Take care what you say, Peter! Don't you know that you are criminating yourself at every word? I shall not feel bound to keep my oath under such circumstances."

"What do you mean?" asked the other, rather angrily.

"If you knew when and where the body was placed in the water, why did you not at once make your knowledge known to the proper officers?"

"I had my reasons," was the sulky rejoinder, for Peter was astonished and displeased at the way Treddle was taking him up.

"If what you have told me is true, this is a dangerous confession for you to make, let me warn you."

"How so, sir?"

"There is but one person who has admittance to the cellar, knows about the empty safe, the man-hole, and all the peculiarities of the situation. That person, trusted and unfeared, may have taken advantage of Mr. Glaston's stooping posture before a safe containing money, and may have murdered him for the purpose of robbing the safe. There is but one person who could do it."

"Who is that?" cried Peter, hoarsely.

"You!" answered the cashier, steadily.

For a moment Peter stared at him blankly; then he burst out laughing; then he grew grave again.

"You forget, sir. Could I have relocked the safe, or written that letter to his wife found in Mr. Glaston's desk?"

"You might, by cunning and watching, have learned to manage the lock of the safe; but as to the letter—why was that written at all if there was a murder committed?"

Here he turned and scrutinised the faces of the two women, who were sitting speechless with indignation.

"Peter," he then added, suddenly, in a tone of immense relief, "this is a joke you are playing upon me. You have told me this outrageous story to see how I would take it!"

"You say I am the only man who has access to the cellar?"

"Oh, I go there, of course, and Mr. Spiderby. I know it was not myself who was engaged in such a murderous transaction," still half-jesting, for he really did not believe to be true what the porter had said. "You don't mean to accuse me, do you, Peter?"

"No, sir."

"Well—Spiderby?"

"There you have it, sir! Yes—Spiderby!"

"Are you in earnest?"

"I saw him do it."

"Beware, Peter, what you say!"

"I saw him do it."

"Spiderby!" repeated the cashier, musingly, and in lingering accents of doubt and dread.

For a few moments there was silence, broken only by the loud ticking of the clock. Treddle was thinking—more intensely than ever in his life before—over the events of the last four weeks—ay, back even beyond that, searching in his own mind for proof or disproof of the monstrous statement made by the porter.

Looks, tones, and actions, which had made little impression at the time, he had found were imaged on his memory, to revive into new and greater significance. Yet he would not, could not, dared not believe the accusation made against his employer by this odd creature, whom he had never felt that he understood, sometimes so simple, sometimes so cunning. Neither could he deny to himself a feeling of distrust and personal aversion to Spiderby had been growing upon him for some time, that he could not touch his hand except with reluctance. This he had attributed to his own pique at hearing the hanker disparage Miss Bromley; but he now became aware that the feeling was older and deeper.

Why may conceive a personal dislike to people whom yet we would not think of accusing of anything bad. Thus it had been with Thomas. He had perceived the difference between the warm, open, sunny nature of Harry Glaston and the close, repelling, selfish disposition of the senior partner, and loved one while he had barely respected the other, yet it had never occurred to him to question if the latter were less honest because less attractive. A thousand pictures of the past, some faint and shadowy, others vivid as lightning, flashed through his brain, while the loud ticking of the clock grew louder, and mother and daughter sat motionless, awaiting his next words, and Peter, his face now flushed with a certain expression of dignity and decision not often seen on his homely features, quietly allowed his declaration to take such effect as it might.

"If you really and truly saw him do it, there is nothing that can justify your not immediately making the fact known. If Mr. Glaston's body lay there all that time with the fatal wounds upon it, what prevented your crying out to the murderer at first, and proving your words while the opportunity remained?"

"Heaven knows it was my duty to do it, sir. But I was afraid."

"Afraid? Of what?"

"That he'd turn round and lay the murder on my shoulders, sir. He's deep. He's cunning. Oh, how I hate him! Don't you see, he's rich and respected and powerful. I'm poor and half-witted. There was but two of us who knew the truth—him and me. If I accused him he'd say at once that I had killed his partner and robbed the safe, and in my half-witted cunning had laid it to him. Lor! he'd have made out his case in no time, and had the satisfaction of seeing a rope round my neck, while he lived on to enjoy himself with that pretty woman he's after. Ha! ha! ha! you yourself, Mr. Treddle, the first thing you say is that I did it! Ain't that proof?"

"Perhaps. I must confess there is truth in what you say."

"Yes, you yourself would have sided with Spiderby against me. I should have been mobbed—hung before this—folks would have been so outraged because a fool like me killed a man like Mr. Glaston. No, sir! When I happened to see the thing done I knew in a minute I'd got to keep my eyes shut and my mouth open for Spider to put in what he pleased, or I was a dead man. I saw I'd got to lay low for a while. But I'll have him yet—I'll have him yet! I'll strangle him in his own web—I will!" he exclaimed, clapping his hands on his knees in glee.

"How did you happen to see the—the deed committed?"

"Spider gave me permission, very kindly, to go home, as he and Mr. Glaston had to look over the books, which you know they'd been doing for some time. I saw something wicked in his eye when he gave it, so I thanked him and made up my mind to stay about. I said I'd left my coat in the cellar, and I would go down and get it. So I ran down and opened the man-hole, and came up all right, and went off out of the front door. Pretty soon I sneaked round the house, climbed over the fence, crept through the

man-hole, and there I stayed, like a sneak-thief, listening to them quarrelling in the private room overhead. It was dark as pitch in the cellar passage, for I shut the iron shutter to the hole as soon as I got inside. Pretty soon they came down with a lamp. Mr. Glaston carried the light. I hid behind a ash-barrel near the man-hole; it was so dark in that corner they couldn't see me, but I saw them plain as they passed by. Mr. Glaston's face was red and angry, as if he'd been insulted. Spider was white as chalk, and his two black eyes like coals of fire.

"I couldn't see 'em unlock the safe, but I heard 'em, as well as all they said about the bonds being there. I didn't like to stir, you may reckon, sir; but I felt so strange as I remembered how Spider looked I began to feel scared for Mr. Glaston. I crept out from behind the barrel like a cat after a mouse, feeling along until I could see the two men by the safe, the lamp on the floor, Mr. Glaston bending down, t'other bending over him with an iron bar in his hand. I swear to you if ever a man tried to holler it was me! But I was a second too late—before I knew what had happened, all in a flash, down came the bar once—twice—thump—crash—ah-h-h! Effie, some water!"

The girl sprang and handed him a drink. The great fellow was deadly pale and faint with the horrible recollection. No one spoke until he had recovered sufficiently to proceed with his narrative.

"The lamp was knocked over, probably by Mr. Glaston throwing out his arm, the light went out, there was not a groan, not a sound, but the hearse, deep breathing of the murderer. Oh, how I longed to spring on him—to throttle him! If I had rushed out that minute and called in the whole town, he would have been convicted and I safe enough. But I didn't think quick enough. I couldn't move or speak. Spiderby felt his way upstairs. He was gone so long that I ventured at last, all in a tremble, to get behind my barrel again.

"In about twenty minutes he came down with another lamp, or, rather, a bit of candle that I sometimes used. His face was like the devil's—another, I'm certain of that—you needn't shake your head."

"I heard him say: 'Dead—dead—dead!—and I'm for ever damned; but that's the price I've got to pay for what I want.'"

"I made no doubt Mr. Glaston was dead, for he'd never stirred or made a sound; so as I couldn't do him any good I laid low for my own sake. I couldn't see behind the barrel, but I heard him drag the body and push it into the big safe—which you know is just a closet built in the stone wall, with a stout iron door—then he locked it in, picked up the pieces of the lamp, and went where I kept my broom and pail, and got water, washed up the floor, and put the iron bar back on the door, and arranged everything. By that time I knew it must be nearly or quite dark. He went upstairs, and there I was, alone, with that dead corpse. I came very nigh kicking the bucket myself! Mother knew I never could abide being where there was dead folks. As soon as I heard Spider locking the front door, I went out by the man-hole, which wasn't locked that night, anyhow."

"Horrible, horrible, horrible!" murmured the cashier.

"I told you I'd astonish you, so as your hair would stand on end," chuckled Peter, seeming, now that the confession was off his own mind, to enjoy the consternation of his visitor.

Thomas looked at him in some disgust. He forgot that what was so new and overpowering to him had been known to the others for long weeks, and that, therefore, some of their horror might have worn away, while his own was so keen. Not that the women were not solemn enough; both were sadly quiet from excess of emotion; and he now noticed that both had grown somewhat pale and thin, as from preying care.

"I don't know what to say—what to think or do," said Treddle, presently.

"Sleep on it, sir," suggested Peter.

"I hardly believe I shall sleep to-night," answered the other, with a faint smile. "I wish you had told me this at least one day sooner, Peter. I should like to have confirmed your statements by examining the back of Mr. Glaston's head for the wounds you speak of."

An indescribable, flickering smile played for an instant in the porter's small gray eyes, which if Thomas had remarked it would have made him still more suspicious of the man than he already was.

"I don't understand how it is that you permitted the funeral to take place. You are allowing all your evidence to slip away; soon it will be too late for you to hope to prove your assertions. I cannot conceive what course you intend to take."

"I don't care so much about seeing Spider hung—though I expect to see it one of these days—as I do about tormenting him. I said I'd be revenged on him the night he insulted sister here, and I'm getting my revenge every day now. He's afraid of me! He

suspects I suspect. But he don't know I know. He's as pleasant as a basket of chips—but oh! how he watches-and watches! I shouldn't wonder if he was peeping through that shutter now!"

Effie shivered and moved closer to her mother.

"That's what I call revenge, sir. To see him angling and angling for a fish that won't bite. He tries to get something out of me. But of course I'm stupid. So he's in misery."

"But, if he is such a person as you make out, and is afraid of you, he will certainly take some step to get rid of you, Peter. Reflect! You have his good name—own his life—in your power. Do you think he would hesitate to put you aside, as he did him?"

"He would as soon crush me, sir. But I keep my eyes open. I don't mean to give him a chance. Now, I shouldn't have told you what I have, Mr. Treddle, only two brains is better than one. I want you to lie low and look sharp for the motive of the murder, sir. I want you to look over the books, with a microscope, as they call it. I want you to make out all the scratches and false writings. I want you to keep a look-out for stray papers and scraps of writing—and, most, I want you to keep an eye on the Spider himself."

"I certainly will," said Treddle, "and upon you, too," he added, mentally, for his mind still vibrated between two opinions. "Now I must go home and think this over. Good-night, sir."

"Good-night, sir. I shall be as blind as a bat to-morrow. So you needn't wink, or look, or nothing."

"Perhaps you think I'm a fool," observed his departing visitor.

"All right," nodded Peter, merrily.

Treddle shook hands with them all and went away. He was not nervous, and was far from cowardly when in his usual frame of mind; but to-night the sigh of the wind or dropping of a leaf startled him. Several times, during his rapid walk home, he fancied he heard stealthy steps behind him, and, wheeling suddenly about, gazed back through the starlight, always to find that there was no one near him. He was glad to get into the house, lock himself in his chamber, and think over the strange revelation he had that evening listened to.

The reader, who knows that Peter Cooper dragged from the river the body which had been thrown there, is aware that he must have made some important reservation in his story—that his confidences to the cashier had been but partial; but Treddle himself was of course unconscious of this. The man's conduct was not satisfactory to him; he felt half-inclined to suspect him; yet, like water let in through a crevice, his suspicion of Spiderby deepened and deepened, and could not be shut out, now that it had once forced an entrance.

While, after all, Peter had not explained why he laughed at the funeral.

CHAPTER VIII.

What plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? *Merchant of Venice.*

The day after the funeral Treddle was at his desk betimes. He was aware that his haggard face betrayed a sleepless night, and when he heard Spiderby speaking cheerily on the steps to the porter he felt that it grew more haggard, and he made a distressing effort to appear pleasant and natural. Never in his life had he suffered such absolute mental agony as when Spiderby entered the bank; but he mastered himself, calling over to Smith some jocular question, which he, being partially deaf, never heard.

"Good morning, Treddle."

"Good morning, Mr. Spiderby."

"Why, you look ill. Anything the matter?"

"A bad headache—took cold yesterday," stammered the cashier.

"Ah! yes, the ground was damp at the cemetery. Think I took a slight cold myself."

The banker passed on into his private room. He looked happy. Not even the reference to the funeral caused a shadow on his cheerful features. Not since the disappearance of Harry Glaston had he worn so natural an air. He hummed a soft tune—a tender love-tune—to himself as he carelessly turned over his papers.

Treddle heard the light-hearted humming, and his dark suspicions melted into sunlight. It seemed to him as if he had only dreamed that Peter had told him that frightful story.

As for Spiderby, however deeply he may have regretted his partner's loss, it was but human nature that he should feel relieved from the depression which had weighed him down while so much was uncertain. Now that the suicide's remains were found and buried the long excitement must, in a measure, subside. It was impossible for the cashier to think that Spiderby, if guilty of the death of his friend, could sit and sing there in the very room haunted by the shadow of that last disagreement and

its sequel. His experience was not large enough to enable him to understand that even the criminal has his happy moments—the condemned man his moments of peace and hope. Spiderby, if guilty, had cause to rejoice, to reflect that the last sad rites were over without even a breath of suspicion having been blown across his path. Success had crowned him for her own. The danger of detection must be over. No accident could now reveal the truth. All he had to do was to forget what he had done, and to go on and enjoy the fruits of his partner's death, as if Fate and not his own hand had plucked them.

Such might have been Spiderby's mood, prompting him to hum the song which he had heard sung by the sweet voice which had since grown so familiar with moans and sighs.

True it was that his thoughts were not with that room or with the present; they had flown forward on eager wings to the time when he should dare to tell Alice Glaston how he loved her.

From every blank page her loveliest face looked up at him as he had seen it on the night of their first meeting, scarcely two years ago—the face of a girl of eighteen, fair and childish for that age, with the glossy, golden curls straying about it, its laughing blue eyes, the dimpled mouth, and, sweeter than all, the artless joy of every look and movement.

He and her future husband, Harry Glaston, had made her acquaintance on the same occasion. It had chanced in this manner: The partners were in London on business, and were invited by a friend whom they met to dine with him and spend the evening, as he believed his wife expected some company to celebrate the birthday of a niece of hers. Harry, young and fond of gaiety, assented at once.

At dinner they had not the pleasure of meeting the young *débutante*, for which Spiderby was grateful, as the dinner was excellent, and he and the host remained long over the wine. But Harry was disappointed; he did not drink wine, and as the ladies of the house excused themselves to dress for the evening, he had a long time to linger about the gaily decorated parlours, amusing himself as he best could with the pictures, flowers, and piano.

At length, quite weary of these, he chose a comfortable seat in a quiet corner, and was feeling almost sleepy when he was aroused by a silken rustling on the staircase and the entrance of a group of ladies, one of whom was his hostess, the second a friend of hers whom she had introduced to him at dinner, the third—an angel!

The hostess, if she recalled young Glaston to her mind at all, probably thought that he was with her husband and Spiderby, who had retreated from the dining-room to the library. The three ladies paused under the central chandelier, while the two elder began to turn about the younger, criticise, and admire her toilette.

"You must have a half-blown rose of the palest pink, peeping out of this cluster of ringlets, Alice," said the lady of the house, choosing one from a vase on the mantelpiece. "There! how do you like that, Honora?"

"It's that 'finishing touch' of which we hear so much," answered the other lady, laughing.

Then the two stood back, and made Alice spread out to its fullest amplitude the train of her elaborate white dress, while they surveyed her, at their leisure, from the rosebud nestled in those cunning circles of glittering hair down to the rosette on the white satin slipper.

Blushing, but with admirable fortitude, she withstood the battery of criticism until, lifting her lovely eyes, they, all unexpectedly, met a bright, admiring pair fixed on her with such undisguised approval, such warmth of silent praise, that she grew rosy from head to foot, nearly dropping her fan and bouquet as she uttered a little "Oh!" which brought Harry to his senses, and made him spring to his feet and apologise.

"It is I who should beg your pardon," said his hostess, not a bit displeased by this first token of the effect her niece was to produce, "for in the excitement of dressing Alice I forgot you were here."

Then the young pair were introduced; and if ever on earth there was a case of love at first sight on both sides this was one. Not that Alice Bromley, so young and inexperienced, knew that she was in love—she never dreamed of it; she only knew that she was the happiest girl that ever was, and that her first party was going to be a thousand times more pleasant than she could have believed, that the atmosphere was sweet with the roses in the vases, that she trod on clouds, and her heart beat to music.

With this glow of rapture on her face, still warmed and lighted by the blush which Glaston had called there, she was presented to Spiderby.

After the graceful, half-coquetish obeisance which she made to the middle-aged banker, she scarcely thought of him again, except when, two or three times during the evening he came for her to dance

He danced delightfully, and she liked him for a partner better than any one, except that young friend of his—dancing with him was something simply celestial.

After a time it happened that she asked him if Mrs. Spiderby was present. Spiderby stared a moment, then laughed as if very much amused, and told her there had never been any Mrs. Spiderby, but that he hoped there might be some day. She blushed, not at the insinuated compliment, which an older girl might have been quick to understand, but at her mistake; and he took her blush and embarrassment for encouragement.

Alice Bromley found her first experience of society delicious. The following day Spiderby had an excuse for remaining in town until afternoon. Harry was glad to hear it, as he would like to call on his hostess of the previous night before leaving town.

In the meantime Miss Bromley had received two magnificent bouquets, one of which stood on the piano when the two gentlemen called, causing Spiderby to experience a gratification which he would not have felt had he known that the young girl had a lovelier and more honoured one in her own room.

Harry was young and frank. All the way back to Burnley he chatted about Miss Bromley, expressing his admiration of her loveliness and sweetness, and declaring that he meant to continue the acquaintance formed by such a happy accident. His partner listened, answered cordially, but made no return of confidence. He, hardened old bachelor, after whom prudent mothers and wealth-loving daughters had been angling for years, had become the victim of this artless, pure-hearted girl, in one brief evening, and without any effort on her part.

Yes, Spiderby—gallant and courteous to all, but cold and cruel in heart and practice, indifferent to women of fashion, seeking his pleasure where he listed—had succumbed completely to the child-smile in those sweet blue eyes. Innocence, belonging to freshest, brightest beauty, had conquered him at a glance.

He was desperately in love, if the intense, jealous, set desire to make Alice Bromley his wife could be called love. Already he had made many inquiries of her uncle, and was familiar with her antecedents and prospects.

Mr. Bromley—not dreaming that Spiderby, the incorrigible, was making these inquiries for himself—went freely into the history of his niece, that there might be no misunderstanding.

Arthur Bromley, his elder brother and Alice's father, had been a wealthy man; but after the death of his wife, when Alice was ten and Katrina eight years of age, he had gone into some reckless speculations, and at his death, two years later, it was found that but little was left for the maintenance of the orphan daughters. In his will he had desired that they should be placed in a first-class school and receive the best education; with the idea that their accomplishments might either secure them good matches, or procure them the means of maintaining themselves. The two girls had been ever since at boarding-school, except when spending their yearly vacation with their aunt.

"The man who seeks Alice in marriage must understand that she has no fortune," the uncle had said. "A man would be asking too much to require a fortune with her," Spiderby had responded. "She is a fortune in herself."

But of all this Spiderby said not a word as he sat beside Harry, listening to his betrayal of his young love. He forced himself to listen with a quiet smile, which his partner mistook for sympathy, while inwardly he burned with jealousy of this handsome, eager fellow, so youthful and so hopeful, who never seemed to think it possible that he might covet the same prize.

From that hour it was Spiderby's purpose to outwit his friend. His visits to London became of extraordinary frequency; and Harry would not have known their object had he not heard from Miss Bromley, during his own frequent calls, of Mr. Spiderby's friendliness. Still he did not suspect the truth. He really thought Spiderby was interesting himself in his behalf, and was grateful accordingly.

That was a winter of unclouded pleasure to Harry Glaston. His position, fortune, and character were such that he was warmly welcomed by Miss Bromley's relatives, who allowed, for once, "the course of true love to run smooth." On one occasion Harry was so fortunate as to find Miss Bromley alone, and have her society all to himself for one long, sweet evening. The opportunity was not neglected—before her aunt and uncle returned from the concert she had promised her lover to become his wife, and was led by him to receive their consent and congratulations the moment they entered the door.

The very next morning it chanced that Spiderby, being in town, called on Miss Bromley. He was as disconcerted as his partner had been happy; for

he could not but see that his rival had superior advantages. However, he had vowed that by fair means or foul he would win Alice from her younger lover.

He brought on this visit a present of a superb set of pearls, for Spiderby's experience with the sex had been such that he imagined a woman's love could be bought by ministering to her vanity.

As Alice came into the room she blushed and smiled, and blushed again so deeply, and looked so shy and so overpoweringly pretty and happy and glad to see him, that Spiderby, not yet informed of what had occurred only the previous evening, entirely misinterpreted her emotion.

His own heart beat in his throat, and as she demurely held out her little white hand he pressed it to his lips in sudden rapture. Alice was as far on the wrong track as he. She thought that Harry had informed him of their engagement, and that his friend had come expressly to congratulate her. This was why she blushed so prettily, and why she only laughed when her visitor kissed her hand.

Encouraged by his success, beaming with triumph, Spiderby took up the little package from the sofa beside him, undid the outer wrappings, and placed the velvet casket in her hands.

"Examine," he said, gaily, "and tell me if you approve. It would be hard, I trust, Alice, to find a wedding gift precious and lovely enough for you. I could find nothing more appropriate than this."

Rosy and smiling, she raised the cover and beheld the milky gems reposing on cushions of pink velvet—an exquisite present, indeed.

"Your gift has but one fault," she murmured, tears springing to her blue eyes—for she was deeply sensitive to kindness, and felt this expression of esteem the more that it came from Harry's business partner and friend; "it is too costly by far."

"You do not refuse it?" he asked, eagerly.

"If aunt thinks it proper for me to accept a present so very beautiful and expensive, I shall take it with pleasure and gratitude, Mr. Spiderby."

"You know the terms?" he continued, a little anxiously, for he could hardly believe his sudden encouragement—"as a betrothal gift?"

"Oh, yes!" she replied, innocently, blushing anew at the reference; "I understood that from the first."

"My darling Alice!" he cried.

He was about to snatch her to his breast, but she, surprised at his glowing eyes and ardent expression, drew back, murmuring in her confusion:

"No, no; even Mr. Glaston didn't do that," laughing and shy, putting the table between them. "Why, how soon Harry must have taken you into his confidence! It was only last evening that he made me promise, and here I am receiving his friend's congratulations this morning."

"Harry!" stammered the banker.

It was now his turn to become confused. His face grew so white and so black in a moment that his companion watched him in alarm.

"What were you saying about Harry?" he demanded, in a changed, strained voice.

"Nothing, only that he must have confided to you our engagement in great haste," she answered, entirely puzzled.

"Ha! ha! ha! Yes—certainly, yes! Harry is a frank fellow! Will you call Mrs. Bromley, and get her opinion of the pearls?"

Alice ran upstairs for her aunt. When the two ladies returned together the visitor had departed, but the jewels remained on the table.

"How delicate of him!" commented the matron.

"He runs away that we may not compliment too highly his taste and generosity. He wishes to leave you no excuse for refusing. Alice dear, you've been a great success—do you know it? I'm morally certain that you could have Mr. Spiderby, if Mr. Glaston had not got the start."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the young girl, "I hope not. It must be terrible to like where you are not liked. But as for Mr. Spiderby, the very idea is absurd. He's not a marrying man—and I'm too young for him—and I never thought of such a thing! He's been very friendly on Mr. Glaston's account."

Alice never understood the secret of the wedding-present of pearls—the fatal mistake which Spiderby had made. Sometimes a vague idea of the truth would float before her as she met his burning eyes fixed on her with an expression which she did not understand; but she was not vain enough or wise enough to comprehend. She simply drove the unpleasant thought away, and smiled on him with childish confidence.

He never forgot the mortification and the disappointment of that scene. Selfish, and of tireless purpose, he was not one to bear defeat lightly. He brooded over his thwarted desires. He hated Glaston for his success. But nothing of this appeared upon the surface.

During the following summer he saw but little of the bride-elect. She was away, with her aunt, at the

summer residence of the latter, busy with her *trousseau*; and much of the time Harry was visiting them.

In September the lovers were married. Mrs. Bromley gave them a grand wedding. Spiderby was one of the groomsmen. Katrine, the bride's sister, came from school to enjoy the important occasion.

Spiderby made an excellent "best man." His self-possession and knowledge of his pleasant duties helped the affair to pass off most successfully. Once or twice he surprised the bride by those curious looks which he gave her, but when the wedding was over, and she away with her husband on the bridal journey, she thought of them no more.

In October the young couple came to Burnley, and at once took possession of their new house; which had been all the summer building for them, and was finished and furnished with a luxury almost extravagant in a beginner like Glaston, who, although enjoying a moderate fortune, and in a good business, had yet a limit to his means.

It did indeed seem, to the fond husband, as if nothing could be too dear or too beautiful for his young wife. And as he was enjoying a liberal and increasing income from his business, he ventured to gratify his tastes and wishes without stint.

The result was a home of luxurious beauty, presided over by its youthful mistress in a spirit worthy of the place.

At this happy home Spiderby, the partner in business, was naturally a frequent visitor. He may have resolved honestly again and again to stay away; but, if so, the enchantment was always too strong for him, for ever drawing him with an unseen, powerful force.

Two or three times a week he would go home with Harry to dinner—not because he did not grow to hate the society of this fortunate man, but because he could feast his eyes upon Mrs. Glaston, daintily presiding at the head of her table, and listen afterwards to her sweet voice singing the songs for which he asked.

It was one of these songs which Spiderby hummed as he looked carelessly over his papers on the morning after the funeral. Lightly and airily the notes floated through the half-open door, catching and holding Treddle's attention so that he made all kinds of mistakes in his own employment. He could not see the figures before his eyes. Instead, an awful vision kept rising before him, shutting out the busy street and the gay sunlight. Down, in the murky gloom of the cellar, by the light of a glimmering lamp, he beheld the dark form of one man bending over that of his unsuspecting friend, the murderous weapon in his hand—and, over that, in the room above, he saw that same man sitting, smiling to himself, alone, no longer troubled by the presence of that undesired friend, humming tenderly:

"Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shivered in my narrow frame.
Oh, Love, Oh, fire! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul through
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew."

The rooms were filled with the low, broken, passionate words—some dropped out entirely, as the singer sang them in silence to his thoughts, others thrilling softly and clearly upon the cashier's ear as he stole a troubled look through the half-open door at Spiderby humming.

CHAPTER IX.

I would that I were low laid in my grave;
I am not worth this coil that's made for me:

King John.

Two young people were slowly pacing up and down the length of Mrs. Glaston's drawing-room. It was quite late in the evening—so late as ten o'clock, but the gas was not lighted, for the two had been staying with Alice in her pretty sitting-room until a few minutes ago, when the intrusion of a third party had caused Miss Bromley to ask Mr. Treddle if he would not like some music, and to take him into the drawing-room, which they found so softly and brilliantly illuminated by the full moon that it seemed like desecration to force an artificial glare to take its place. In fact, the moonlight seemed to have the effect of making them forget even the music for which they pretended to come.

It was not often that Katrine gave a young man so much encouragement as to invite him to a solitary *tête-à-tête* with her. Even now, although she took Treddle's arm, and walked silently by his side up and down, back and forth, now in the shadow, now in the broad columns of light which lay on the carpet reaching in from the windows, from which her hand had drawn back the curtains—even now, he did not accept it as an act either of coquetry or encouragement.

She had asked him in there because Spiderby had come to see Mrs. Glaston, at her request, on business. The two were now in the sitting-room, sitting opposite each other at a table covered with tradesmen's

bills and other unpleasant papers. And Treddle felt that his companion was thinking far more of those things than she was of him.

It was Christmas week. Mrs. Glaston, sorely shaken from the sad composure of resignation—the resignation of a broken heart, which for ten weeks she had been struggling after—by the crowding memories of this holiday season, had been farther troubled and distressed by the impouring of a small flood of bills which had been accumulating since her husband's death. It would appear as if she were in debt to almost every tradesman in town; there was a bill for a year's supply of coal laid in during August, grocers' bills, the heavy expenses of the funeral, there were payments due on some stocks which Harry had purchased, and, instead of paying a dividend, another ten or fifteen per cent. on the investment was demanded. Alice's poor, tired brain, exhausted by a dreadful mental anguish, had in vain attempted to cope with these accounts; but Katrine, quick and willing, had looked them all over and got them in order, reckoning up the amount of ready money required to meet them at six hundred pounds.

"I don't believe the stocks are worth keeping; there's one hundred and twenty pounds to be paid on them, Alice dear. I advise you to ask Mr. Spiderby to sell them."

"I shall have to send for him, Katy, to learn how I am to get so much money. Of course, there is property, and some of it must be sold. I suppose I must borrow money of him until the estate is settled up. He knows what the security will be better than any one. It may be that he will buy those stocks and pay the amount down. That will relieve me of all embarrassment."

So those two inexperienced children had sent for Spiderby to give them advice and help them manage their affairs. He had expected the summons—knew that it was inevitable—and came most willingly. Treddle had chanced to be visiting at the house on the same evening of this business arrangement, and Miss Bromley had asked him into the drawing-room that her sister might talk unrestrainedly with her friendly adviser.

The snow lay cold and white in the street, but within there was a summer atmosphere—"glorious summer" to Treddle, promenading in the moonlight, with that little brown hand on his arm and those bright eyes looking up into his face confidingly. For Katrine, with all her impetuosity and wilfulness, liked as well as any one else to indulge herself in a fit of feminine dependence when there was any prudence in so doing.

"Poor Alice," sighed the girl, "she is not used to the kind of work she has to do to-night."

"May I ask what that work is, Miss Bromley?"

"Certainly you may. It's looking over accounts."

"That's not very serious," said the cashier, laughing. "I do a great deal of that work."

"I should think you might without hurting you," responded Katrine, glancing up at his broad shoulders and tall head. "Besides, you always have plenty of money with which to settle them; and neither the money nor the accounts are your own—so they do not lie heavily on your heart or brain as they do on poor little Alice's. But, supposing they were your own, and you had no money to meet them?"

"Ah-h! that certainly would alter the case. However, that cannot be Mrs. Glaston's strait. She may have an empty purse just now, but it will be easy for her to realise money on some of her property. Yet how hard and unpleasant it must be for her to have such things forced on her attention at this time!" he added, in a low voice of sympathy.

"Thank you, Mr. Treddle. Yet I suspect none of us realise how hard it is."

They walked the length of the room once in silence. As they came in front of the window Katrine paused, turning her companion by design so that she could scrutinise his face while she spoke.

"Mr. Treddle, I want to ask you a question."

"Ask me a hundred, and I will be grateful."

"But this is a serious question. You must not smile, and you must remember that it is confidential." She hesitated a little, looking from the window into the quiet street, then back again into the kind face bending to listen with a double expression upon it, which, at a less serious moment, would have struck her mirthful nature as something comical—so anxious to listen with due solemnity, yet so proud and gratified to be made a confidant did he look.

"As the cashier of the bank you must be entirely familiar with the state of affairs there. Is it possible that Mr. Glaston left nothing—that he drew out and largely overran his capital, so that the sale of this house and what other real estate he has will scarcely be sufficient to indemnify Mr. Spiderby for his losses?"

She was greatly agitated as she asked this question—not for herself, but for that darling sister, dear as her own life to her true heart.

"I—I can hardly think it is quite so bad as that," stammered Treddle, unwilling to confess and unable to deny. "I have hoped that at least this home might be saved to her. But I don't know."

"Mr. Spiderby has several times hinted as much. It has not had much effect upon Alice, she has been too preoccupied; but I have pondered it night and day. Have you any idea how he lost so much money in one short year?"

"I have not been able to make out what he did with it. I must believe that he speculated. All of which I am positive is that large sums were drawn from the firm in his name, until I was astonished and alarmed at the way things were going. If I had dared I would have spoken to Mr. Spiderby as early as five or six months ago. At last he spoke to me, saying that things were going wrong, and the books were to be gone over by himself. We went over them together, before he spoke at all to Mr. Glaston about them. We found—but there, I had forgotten to whom I was speaking," beginning to walk so rapidly as almost to drag Katrine after him.

"Mr. Treddle, you are keeping something back from me!"

"What makes you think so?"

"I see it in your face. Oh, tell me all—tell me the worst! It is better for me to hear it than her. It may be that by knowing it I can keep it from her—act as a guard!"

"Are you certain that it is best for you to know all?"

"Oh, quite certain. Only in this way can I stand between my poor Alice and those troubles which will beset her. Believe me, Mr. Treddle, although I am young, I can bear more than my sister. I have a great deal of endurance."

"You have more strength of character than most girls of seventeen, Miss Bromley."

"Yes, I know I have. I hope I have enough to inspire you with trust in my discretion. What is it that you are keeping back?"

"It will be dreadfully painful for you to hear."

"Well, then, assure me that the knowledge will never reach my sister."

"I cannot. It remains with Mr. Spiderby to keep or disclose. Should he be as generous as he ought to be, no harm will ever come of it."

"If it depends on his generosity, then I tremble!" thought Katrine. "In that case, Mr. Treddle," she said, aloud, "you had better prepare my mind against possibilities."

Again a brief silence as they walked up and down together.

"Did you know Mr. Glaston personally?" Treddle asked, clearing his throat—it was so hard for him to begin, even in this roundabout way.

"I only saw him at the wedding. I thought him everything that I could ask for my darling sister," she replied, quickly, as if jealous of her lost brother's reputation, and fearing it was about to be assailed.

"We all thought him almost perfect," said Treddle, sadly. "I cannot tell you how I liked him, Miss Bromley. He was my *beau-ideal*, my model of a Christian gentleman. I would have trusted him with any earthly treasure merely upon his word. But on our examination of the books, can I tell you how I was surprised—shocked—to find that I must alter my opinion of him! It soon became evident that forged cheques had been presented from time to time, on which the money had been paid. These cheques were all drawn in the name of an old, miserly doctor, a queer character, who lives out in the country a few miles from here. He had deposited four thousand pounds with us, out of a personal fancy which he had taken for Mr. Glaston. This sum had all been withdrawn in sums of one thousand pounds, taken out at four different times. During the careful inspection which we gave everything we discovered these cheques to have been forged. I myself had paid out the money on them, always to the same person—a rough, ill-dressed, farmer-looking old man, who wore green spectacles, and represented himself to be Doctor Bazzard. The first time he came in I required some proof that he was the person he said he was."

"Humph! humph!" he snapped; "where's Mr. Glaston? He knows me."

"I looked about for Mr. Glaston, but neither he nor Mr. Spiderby was in the bank. The old man then pulled out two or three letters, addressed to Doctor Bazzard, which satisfied me, and I gave him the one thousand pounds. After that of course I made no trouble, recognising him the moment he appeared, in his rusty brown coat and green spectacles. After convincing ourselves that the cheques were forged, and the money lost, probably beyond recovery, to some clever villain, we made quiet inquiries, and found out that the old doctor had been absent for some months, having gone away to visit a daughter who was slowly dying of consumption. It was Mr. Spiderby himself who confided to me, in great agitation, and under a promise of secrecy, which I am now

breaking—for good reasons of my own, Miss Bromley—his belief that Mr. Glaston had become involved in difficulties, and had himself drawn the forged cheques and presented them in the disguise of the doctor—not," he added, eagerly, "that he thought his partner meant real dishonesty—that he, no doubt, intended to borrow this amount for a short time to meet obligations which he had incurred, with the full intention of returning it before the doctor should come back." It would appear," continued the cashier, slowly and reluctantly, "that his difficulties increased—that he found himself unable to return the amount, and that he had already exhausted his own resources. It was his desperation at finding himself in such a position, no doubt, which drove him to suicide—that is," he added, musingly, half to himself, "if he really committed suicide."

Miss Bromley pressed eagerly on his arm. "What do you mean by that?" she cried. "Do you doubt? What can you doubt?"

"Nothing, nothing! I meant nothing, I assure you! I did not know of what I was talking. Of course he could not have been murdered. There was the note to his wife, and all that, we know. He was driven to the deed by the strait in which he found himself. He was too proud to bear disgrace; he certainly was too conscientious—too good a man to have meant to keep that money. I can see through it all."

"I thank you for his sake," said Katrina, sadly, "since he has gone where his deeds will be judged by one wiser than either of us. Yet I hope I do not mistake you when I assert that I do not believe that you, even under these temptations, could have done as he did."

"I pray Heaven not. Yet how do I know? Mr. Glaston was a better man than I. I am sure of it. I knew him, you see, dear Miss Bromley. He had such noble, such splendid qualities. If he fell I cannot pretend to say who could stand. This I do believe. That he was not fully in his right mind. His brain was over-excited by the strain upon it. Mr. Spiderby says he has no doubt that it was under the first approaches of brain fever that he drowned himself. We all think so. My hope and prayer are that Mr. Spiderby will pocket the loss—say nothing about the forgery. After all it will not seriously embarrass him."

"If he should do so magnanimous a deed, I will bless him," cried Katrina.

She had never liked Spiderby; now that he held her brother's reputation in his power she feared him; yet he had been so gentle, kind, unobtrusively helpful, how was it that she doubted his will to save her sister Alice from the shame of her husband's dishonour?

Why was it that she felt such a distrust of the man?

While she questioned herself they heard the banker stepping out into the hall and putting on his overcoat.

"I must go," said Treddle. "He will expect me to leave when he does."

"Good-night," said Katrina.

Her voice broke, for just then there were tears on her cheeks and in her eyes; she felt such a weight of care on Alice's account it almost seemed to her, strong as she boasted herself, that she must lean on some one as Alice leaned on her.

The sight of those two bright drops on her cheeks, glittering in the moonlight, and of the slight quiver which ran over the rosy lip, was too much for Treddle. He looked—and longed to comfort her. His whole soul went out in the wish to do or say something to lighten her grief.

"I can't stand it to see tears on a woman's face," he said, with an assumption of gaiety, and, stooping quickly, he kissed them off.

He was gone before she could speak a word, leaving her there in a whirl of mingled anger and pleasure, her face burning, her bosom heaving.

If it had been any one but Treddle she would not easily have forgiven the audacious liberty; but she felt that he meant it as a token of pure sympathy, and, somehow, it comforted her, made her feel less alone and care-worn. At the worst, Alice and she would have a friend.

She heard the hall-door close and saw the two men walk away down the moonlit street. Then, rubbing her blushing cheeks with her handkerchief, as if those kisses would be as plain to Alice's eyes as they were to her own consciousness if she did not brush them away, half-happy, half-sorrowful, she crossed the hall, softly pushed open the door, and passed in to see how her sister had fared during her long interview with Spiderby.

(To be continued.)

PAYMENT OF SCHOOL FEES.—The School Boards of Liverpool and Manchester have adopted the fol-

lowing recommendation:—That school fees shall be allowed in the following cases only, excepting under special order:—(a) Where the family consists of two persons, and the weekly income (after allowing for rent) does not exceed 4s. per head per week. (b) Where the family consists of three or four persons, and the income (after allowing for rent) does not exceed 3s. 6d. per head per week. (c) Where the family consists of five or more persons, and the income (after allowing for rent) does not exceed 3s. per head per week.

LIFE'S SHADOWS.

CHAPTER V.

THE words of his daughter, low and incoherent as they were, were instantly comprehended in their full meaning by Colonel Redruth. As Ignatia fell at his feet in convulsions, he gathered up her writhing form and placed it in the arms of a trusty servant, ordering her to be carried to the house and promptly cared for, and directing that a physician should be summoned. Two or three of the women servants, dazed and bewildered, followed after to minister to their beloved young mistress.

Colonel Redruth then looked with eagle glances up and down the river. The twilight was gathering slowly over the busy stream and its banks. The boats thronging about the steps began to move slowly into the current. Only one of the boatmen, a grizzled old man in a skiff, who was cruising along the river in quest of passengers, ventured to demand of the distinguished-looking Indian officer the cause of the lady's outcry.

"Her child has been stolen from her," exclaimed Colonel Redruth. "Have you seen anything of a man with a child on the river within a few minutes?"

"Was it a little yellow-haired girl?" demanded the boatman, "all in white, and bareheaded? I saw such a child in a wherry below here not five minutes ago. She was a-crying, and was in the arms of a handsome young gentleman, who was looking back over his shoulder. The boatman was pulling like mad."

"Overtake that wherry, and I will give you twenty pounds," cried Colonel Redruth, leaping into the skiff with an impetuosity that threatened for an instant to capsize it. "Come, Mr. Weldham. We shall overtake the scoundrel yet. He has but a few minutes' start."

The lawyer sprang into the skiff. The boatman caught up both his oars, pulling lustily, and the little craft shot out into the current. It required an especial skill to dodge the swift little steamers, to thread the maze of coal-barges, and to avoid being run down by various parties of pleasure seekers, who sailed over the twilight waters with snatches of gay songs upon their lips; but the boatman was equal to his task. The skiff shot in and out of dangerous places, now skimming in the shadow of the bank, now threading the very midst of the stream.

"I see nothing of the wherry," cried Colonel Redruth, half-rising in the boat. "It seems as if we were encountering a hundred delays. Can he have landed?"

"We shall soon know, sir," said the boatman. "We shall soon overtake the wherry. Mortal muscles can't do more than mine are doing, sir."

Colonel Redruth tried to calm his impatient spirit. He surveyed the shores with a keen gaze, Mr. Weldham scanning every boat they encountered, and peering among the gathering shadows down the river. But they saw no wherry. They heard no baby screams, no childish outcry. The row was a long one. They swept past Richmond, Old Brentford, and Kew, and the boatman began to flag. He paused repeatedly to wipe the moisture from his wet face on the sleeves of his dingy shirt, and to glance at the shores, and to send a long, scolding gaze over his shoulder.

"It's wuss nor a 'varsity boat race," he muttered. "Never had such a row in my life. See the wherry yet, gov' nor?"

"No, no," answered Colonel Redruth, straining his eyes in a vain quest for it. "Oh, Heaven! will he escape us?"

About a mile below Kew the skiff shot past a wherry which was proceeding leisurely in the lee of the shore. There was but one person in it, a rough-looking boatman.

The proprietor of the skiff dropped his oars with an oath.

"That's our man!" he cried, excitedly. "That's the wherry!"

"But the boatman is alone!" exclaimed Colonel Redruth. "There is no passenger in the boat. We are losing time!"

"It's our man, it's the wherry!" repeated the colonel's boatman, doggedly, raising his oars and pulling in towards the wherry. "I know the man."

"He may have landed his passengers somewhere on the river," suggested the lawyer.

"True, true!" cried Colonel Redruth, excitedly. "Pull faster, my man. Faster still."

The skiff swept alongside the wherry. The boatman in charge of the latter was placidly smoking a pipe as he leisurely plied his oars. He looked up at the occupants of the skiff with a cunning sort of leer, and, shifting his pipe to the farther corner of his mouth, gruffly demanded what was wanted.

"You had a passenger," said Colonel Redruth, in a high, excited voice. "Where did you land him?"

"I've had a many passengers in my day," muttered the fellow. "Land 'em wherever I'm told to. Stand off, you chap," he added, menacing the owner of the skiff with his oar.

"See here, my man," said the lawyer, in a prompt, decisive manner. "This gentleman's grandchild has just been stolen from his house at Twickenham. A young fellow carried her off in a wherry. That wherry was yours—"

"S'posing it was?" interrupted the wherryman. "I can take what passengers I like, can't I? As to the young man's stealing his child, if the child was his 'twasn't stolen, was it? That's not saying I took the gentleman off. I don't know nothing about no gentleman nor no child nuther."

"Would a golden sovereign quicken your memory?" demanded the lawyer, extracting one from his purse and holding it up between his thumb and forefinger. "We shan't harm you, my man, but we must find the stolen child. Quick! Put us on the right track and the coin is yours."

The wherryman's eyes gleamed. He had received just half a sovereign to hold his silence, but his virtue could not resist the double bribe to speak.

"Gentleman landed at Kew to take the train," he said.

The lawyer tossed the sovereign into the wherry. "Back to Kew!" cried Colonel Redruth, burning with impatience.

The boatman pulled lustily against the current towards Kew, but nearly fifteen minutes were occupied in doing the mile. They landed at Kew at last and Colonel Redruth ran swiftly up to the station, while the lawyer lingered to pay the skiff proprietor, who was loth to let his passengers go out of his sight with his handsome fee unsettled. It was evident that the fellow had a chronic dislike to trusting any one.

"Wait for us half an hour," said Mr. Weldham. "If we recover the child, we shall need you to take us back to the villa."

The boatman nodded good-naturedly, and lay off on his oars. The lawyer hurried up to the station.

He found Colonel Redruth pacing the platform of the station like a caged lion. The Indian officer turned to meet him with a face that was positively ghastly in the light of the station lamps.

"What news, colonel?" asked Mr. Weldham.

"The train has gone," said the colonel, huskily. "The scoundrel bought a ticket for London. I tracked him by the little crying child he carried in his arms. I have bought our tickets for the next train, and have telegraphed to London to stop him on his arrival."

"You have done well," said the lawyer. "We shall outwit him after all. If he was a regular rascal, of the shrewd criminal type, he might find some way to outwit us, but I have no fears of him. These dissolute young men run more to violence than cunning. When does the next train leave, colonel?"

"In fifteen minutes. Is the boat waiting?"

The lawyer answered in the affirmative. "I'll send a note of encouragement to my daughter," said Colonel Redruth. "My poor girl! It's an awful blow, Weldham, coming in the very midst of her joy at her release from the scoundrel—an awful, cowardly blow."

He paused under a lamp, took a note-book from his pocket, tore out a blank leaf, and with a pencil wrote upon this a few words to Ignatia, bidding her keep up her courage, and telling her that he was upon the track of the villain who had stolen her child, and that he would be at home in the course of an hour or two with the child in his arms.

Folding the note, he carried it down to the boatman, who sat in his skiff placidly smoking. Bidding him take it to the Larches, he returned to the station, where he resumed his hurried walk, Mr. Weldham keeping pace with him.

The train made its appearance in good time, and the two gentlemen proceeded swiftly up to London, alighting at the Waterloo station. Here they made prompt inquiries, but found that Captain Holm, or any young man with a little child, had not arrived at that station since a look-out had been kept for him.

"He's more clever than I thought," said the lawyer.

"You are sure, colonel, that he left Kew by the Windsor and Richmond line?"

"Yes, I am sure. I saw the station-master, and he had especially remarked Captain Holm as he entered the carriage. The child was still crying pitifully, and he was in a great rage, ordering her roughly to be still."

"He must have alighted somewhere on the line," said Mr. Weldham. "Perhaps he got out at Clapham Junction. We shall have to go back and make inquiries at every station."

This idea was acted upon. They took a slow train that left Waterloo at about half-past nine o'clock—for the evening had worn on to that hour—and retraced their course, making inquiries at every station. At Clapham Junction they were put upon the track again. A station-master had seen a young gentleman, with a child in his arms, alight from a down train. The young gentleman had waited in the station for a train on the South Western main line, and had departed in it. Inquiries at the booking-office developed the fact that the young gentleman had purchased a ticket to Salisbury.

"It will be very easy to trace him by the child," said the lawyer, cheerfully, as the two gentlemen turned from the ticket office. "We must telegraph to Salisbury, and to the intermediate stations, to have him stopped. I should like to see Captain Holm's face when he finds himself arrested on a charge of abduction—just at the moment, too, when he is pluming himself upon the success of his manoeuvres."

"I am afraid he is deeper than we think," said Colonel Redruth, anxiously. "I don't believe we have given him credit for all his shrewdness and cunning."

Some fifteen minutes later a telegraphic despatch was received by the two gentlemen who had waited for it, to the effect that no such person as the gentleman described was in the train mentioned.

"Stumped!" said the lawyer, more forcibly than elegantly, a blank look overspreading his face.

The colonel groaned aloud.

"Holm certainly went by that train," he said, with a bewildered look. "How comes it that he is not in it?"

"He must have had a private key to the door of his carriage—almost all these wild young men carry them. He has let himself out at some station unobserved, or has descended from the train when it had slackened speed so as to render the movement not absolutely dangerous. Our work promises to become difficult. Captain Holm has foreseen that you would organise a thorough pursuit, and is resolved to outwit his pursuers."

Colonel Redruth took the lawyer's arm, and they went out again upon the platform, which was nearly deserted. Here they paced up and down among the soft shadows of the summer night.

"What am I to do?" asked the Indian officer, despairingly. "I cannot go home alone to my daughter. I cannot meet her anguished eyes. This child is a part of her very life. After Holm's desertion, when her heart was torn with fears of my displeasure, she fixed all her hopes upon this little one. The child is wonderfully lovely. I did not know how much I loved her till to-night. Her dainty baby ways were strangely winning." The colonel's voice faltered.

"As for Ignatia, the child has slept on her bosom every night since her birth. I cannot go back alone, Weldham—I cannot!"

The lawyer in sympathy pressed the hand of his friend and client. He was greatly moved.

"I will go for you," he said, after a pause. "I will see your daughter and encourage her. Of course we shall recover the child, but we need a little time. I will represent the matter to Mrs. Holm—to Mrs. Redruth, I should say—and put her in good heart. I have girls of my own, and can show her a father's sympathy. Will you send me?"

"Gladly—but what am I to do?"

"You must go back to London, proceed to Scotland Yard, and obtain an interview with the chief of police. You must engage a keen detective, and set him upon Captain Holm's track. That done, you had better return to The Larches, and wait for the child to be brought to you. Or shall I go to Scotland Yard?"

"I will go," said the father. "I cannot face Ignatia without some grounds on which to bid her hope. See her for me, and tell her I am at work. Tell her that her child shall be found and restored to her, if I have to scour all England inch by inch. I will return home in the morning."

In the course of half an hour a train for Twickenham appeared at the station. Mr. Weldham entered it and departed on his errand of mercy. A little later, Colonel Redruth went to London.

The hour was growing late when he arrived at Waterloo Station. But late as it was he took a cab and proceeded directly for Scotland Yard. He was so fortunate as to find the superintendent in the office. The colonel stated his case, and the address of one of the most skillful detectives in the force was given him. Still burning with restless impatience, he hastened to the address given.

He found the detective at home and a-bed. He roused him up, and was admitted into the house and into a dingy little parlour, where he stated his business.

The detective was a small, wiry man, with a reti-

cent countenance, and a peculiarly quiet manner. Colonel Redruth told him the circumstances under which the child was stolen and the pursuit that had been so fruitlessly instituted, spoke of the relationship existing between Captain Holm and the child, and informed him that the wife had procured a divorce from her husband, that the Divorce Court had awarded the child to her, and that Captain Holm had stolen the little one for revenge.

"The case is common enough," said the detective. "We have had many of them. We shall run the young man to earth very easily. Do you want him held for trial on charge of abduction, sir?"

"No. We want no scandal. The divorce proceedings have been kept out of the papers, excepting the briefest possible mention that such a suit had been instituted. My daughter's name must be kept out of the papers. No scandal must be created to darken her future. She would never consent to prosecute her late husband. All we want is to recover the child."

"That I can safely promise shall come to pass within the week," was the encouraging reply.

Colonel Redruth paid the detective a handsome retaining fee, gave him his address card, and requested to be informed by telegraph the moment the child was found. Then he departed in his cab to an hotel, and retired to a bedroom, but not to sleep. He tossed for a few hours upon his bed till morning dawned, then he arose, dressed, and proceeded again to the Waterloo Station. Here he waited for a train to Twickenham, and, still in the early gray of the summer morning, disembarked at his home station.

He felt in a hopeful mood as he walked up the pleasant country road. It seemed to him impossible that Captain Holm, encumbered by a young child, who was like a mark set upon him that all men might know him, should evade the pursuit of a skillful and thoroughly trained detective, one of the best in the police force. He had an exaggerated idea of the skill of detectives, as many people have. He regarded them as human blood-hounds, and his faith in the skill of the man he had employed was absolute.

He let himself in at the massive door in the tall garden wall of The Larches with his own key, and made his way up to the villa. The household was astir. The windows were open to admit the fresh morning air, the curtains fluttered in the breeze, the front door was ajar, and the sound of subdued voices came from the servants' quarters. There was an air of depression and gloom about the beautiful little place that infected even Colonel Redruth.

He entered the well-lighted, airy hall. As his tread resounded upon the tiled floor the door of the morning-room at his left opened, and Mr. Weldham, worn and weary of aspect, looked out at him with a questioning face.

"It is all right," said the colonel, trying to speak cheerfully. "The detective has no doubt that he will find the child and bring her back. How is Ignatia?"

"She has been in convulsions for hours," said the lawyer as the colonel followed him into the morning-room. "The doctor gave her an opiate, and she is sleeping now. The shock has been terrible for her!"

"I knew it would be," sighed the father. "I will go up to her as soon as she awakens. Has the doctor gone?"

"Yes, colonel; but he said he would return about seven o'clock. Ah! the poor young lady has awakened."

The sound of a piteous moaning, muffled yet distinct, came to their ears from the room above them. Colonel Redruth's countenance changed. Without a word he dashed from the room and hurried to the upper chamber where his daughter lay.

The room was cool, bright, and pleasant. Ignatia lay in bed moaning, and her attendant, the maid and nurse, was bending over her with a draught of medicine, uttering soothing words, which fell upon unheeding ears.

As the colonel entered the room Ignatia sprang up in the bed and reached out her arms to him, her lovely face white and eager.

"My baby!" she cried out, in a voice that cut to her father's heart. "Where is she? Oh, my father, did you find her?"

"Not yet, my darling," answered the father, tremblingly. "The detective is upon the track. He is sure to find her. He will bring her back to-day or to-morrow. We have only to be patient, dear!"

Ignatia's arms dropped helplessly to her side. Her white face lost its eagerness, and she stared up at him with a weariness and despair he had never seen on any human face.

"You don't know Digby Holm, father," she said, in an utter hopelessness. "If you have not found her now, you will never find her. He is more cunning than a serpent. I shall never see her again! She is lost to me for ever! My baby! My poor little child that I loved better than my life!"

She fell back upon her pillow and turned her face to the wall. In an anguish like this who could comfort her? The colonel bent over her, caressed her, and breathed words of encouragement, but she did not seem to hear him.

Presently she fell into a stupor. When she recovered, it was only to battle with all the hideous phantoms incident to brain fever in its worst form.

CHAPTER VI.

FOR many weeks the life of the bereaved young mother hung in the balance. Night and day she raved piteously in delirium, calling for her child. Her moans, her quick, frightened pleadings, her entreaties to him who had been her husband, but now her enemy, were heartrending. She had gentle women nurses, but Colonel Redruth was more gentle and tender than them all. It was he who gave her medicines; it was he who fanned her; he who held her in his arms in loving restraint when she would have arisen in her white garments and bare feet, impelled by an unreasoning instinct to go forth in search of her lost darling. If she agonised for her lost child, he suffered scarcely less for his.

The household went about in list slippers, speaking in hushed voices. The doors were shut softly; the windows were kept darkened. The shadow of death seemed brooding over the place, and no one knew in what moment the destroyer would swoop upon and carry away his victim.

Colonel Redruth grew pale and thin and harassed, under his many anxieties. He paid no heed to his business affairs. What mattered to him his great estates and heavy bank accounts when the life of his only child, so infinitely more precious to him than all his wealth, was threatened with extinction? He turned from all the things he had so lately prized, thinking how vain would they all be if this greater blessing—his daughter's life—were taken from him.

It was late in June, in the full flush of the glowing summer, when Ignatia was stricken down with the brain fever. It was early in August when the crisis of her malady arrived, and she sank, for the first time since the shock of her bereavement, into a deep and refreshing slumber.

Her windows were open to admit the air, but the blinds were closed. A sort of twilight filled the chamber. The nurse sat by the bedside, gently fanning the sick girl. The father and the doctor stood together at the opposite side of the bed, looking down upon the invalid.

The face on which they looked had changed greatly in the past few weeks. It was thin and deathly in its whiteness. It looked like the face of a marble statue. The great eyes looked hollow in their deep settings. The brows were deathly fair. The purplish black hair had been saved with difficulty, and it streamed over the pillows all unbound in more than its former glory. The splendour of Ignatia's beauty was dimmed, but it was not lost. Even the shadow of death could not obscure a loveliness so glorious as hers.

"Is it the crisis?" whispered the father.

"Yes. She will soon awaken from her sleep," returned the doctor, feeling the patient's pulse.

"Will she live?"

"Heaven alone knows that. If she awakes in her right mind she will live."

A choking lump arose in Colonel Redruth's throat. He turned and walked to the window, where he stood motionless.

The minutes passed. A gentle perspiration appeared upon the marble-like face. The breathing, light as a zephyr and almost imperceptible, grew heavier. The chest rose and fell under its white coverings. At last the patient stirred feebly and opened her eyes.

The doctor beckoned to the father in silence. He came and bent over his child in a terrible suspense. Would she know him? Or was she to die in all her bright young beauty, at the very threshold, as one might say, of life? It was a terrible moment for the colonel, as the great dusky eyes, wandering from object to object, settled finally upon his face.

But suddenly a look of tender recognition gleamed in Ignatia's eyes, a faint, sweet smile flickered about her mouth.

"Father!" she whispered. "Dear father!"

A stifled sob burst from the colonel's lips. In all his soldier experiences he had never been unmanned, but now he needed all his self-control to hide his emotion.

"Father!" whispered Ignatia again, feebly.

"Where is—where is—"

The doctor interposed with a soothing draught. Ignatia took it unquestioningly, and dropped asleep again on the instant.

"She will live!" said the doctor.

The Indian officer grasped the hand of the physician in silence.

"You had better keep her quiet for a day or two," said the doctor. "Don't let her talk of her child at present."

The colonel obeyed the injunction. It was not

easy to meet the questioning looks of the poor young mother, and not reply to them, when she again awakened in the evening. It was not easy to evade her inquiries when she asked him feebly next day to bring her "baby" to her, but he managed to do both without exciting her alarm. Her recovery was rapid. Within a week of the crisis of her fever she was able to sit up in an easy-chair, near her open window, from which she could look out into the garden. In her white gown, with its frills and lace, with her hair gathered into braids, and with the soft flush of expectancy in her thin cheeks, she looked very girlish and very lovely. There were roses, dewy and odorous, in her lap. She fastened one in her hair, and one at her throat.

"Now, Martha," she said, brightly, to her attendant, the child's nurse, "go for my darling. The doctor has kept her away from me lest her prattle should excite me. I cannot wait for her any longer. It excites me more not to see her, and to be listening continually to catch the sound of her light steps or her baby voice in the hall. Poor little birdie! She must think me cruel to keep shut up from her so long. Bring her to me, Martha!"

The heavy country face of the nurse grew pale. A strange hesitancy showed in her eyes. She began to move nervously about the dainty chamber, putting away bottles, and clearing the marble shelf above the grate.

"Are you not going, Martha?" asked her young mistress, half-impudently. "How little you comprehend a mother's heart! I am dying to see my little Georgia!"

"Yes," said Martha, not looking at Ignatia. "I will go."

She went out, but not to the nursery. She hurried swiftly down the stairs and knocked at the door of an octagon-shaped room opening on to the lawn, and known as "the study."

The colonel's voice bade her enter. He was writing at a desk, but looked up, greeting the woman anxiously, seeming to know instinctively her errand.

"Well?" he said as she came to a halt just within the door.

"The lady won't be put off any longer, sir," answered the woman. "She is exciting herself about the child. She has ordered me to bring her."

"I will go to her," said the colonel, sighing. He arose and went slowly up the stairs to Ignatia's room, entering it alone.

His daughter looked up at him with a radiant smile. Her countenance fell a little as she saw that he was alone, but she said, brightly:

"Come in, father, and sit down by me. Martha has gone for little Georgia. You must witness the child's delight when she sees me. I have adorned myself with flowers, so that the change in my looks may not frighten my baby. Besides, you know how she loves roses."

Colonel Redruth drew a chair near that of Ignatia. His sorrowful gravity chilled her.

"Is there anything the matter, father?" she asked, with a sudden tremor of apprehension.

"Do you feel pretty strong this morning, dear?" asked the Indian officer, gently.

She assented dumbly, a frightened look gathering slowly in her eyes.

"I have bad news for you," said the colonel, taking her fluttering hand in his strong grasp. "Be brave, Ignatia—"

"Georgia—"

"Georgia has not been found!"

"Not found? Not found?"

"No, Ignatia. I have had police detectives on the search for Holm and the child since her abduction. Not a clue has been obtained to the child's whereabouts. She has been traced to Clapham Junction, and was seen to enter the railway carriage in Holm's arms. She was never seen to come out of that carriage. Holm must have let himself out of the carriage with a private key, but he was not seen to alight at any of the stations. He was seen in Germany a week or two ago, but there was no child in his charge. The child has completely disappeared, Ignatia, and the detectives are baffled."

The colonel had deemed it better to impart the truth at a single blow than to reveal it gradually, inflicting a dozen cruel stabs.

Ignatia sat quite stunned for a little while. When a full realisation of the terrible truth dawned upon her soul her anguish was fearful to witness. We will not dwell upon her awful grief. Only one who has been so terribly and strangely bereaved can comprehend her agony.

When she had grown calmer with the calmness of despair Colonel Redruth said:

"It is well for you to know all, Ignatia, as possibly your knowledge of Holm's character may aid in the search which is still kept up after a desultory fashion. The detectives think that Holm has carried off the child to the Continent, and that he may have placed her in some orphan asylum or child's refuge. Would he be capable of such a proceeding?"

"Yes, he would do anything for revenge," returned Ignatia, brokenly. "His nature was essentially cruel and revengeful. He has told me of a hundred acts of wanton cruelty and wickedness which he has executed in his desire to be revenged upon people whom he disliked. He had no love whatever for the little one. She was but three months old, you remember, when he abandoned her and me. He had no natural affection. He knew that a reconciliation with me had become utterly impossible, and in his rage he would sacrifice anything if by so doing he could wound me to the death. Ostracised by his own relatives, cast off by me, burning with hatred, he has no doubt revenged himself on his innocent child."

"It seems incredible that he should be capable of such an act," said the colonel, "but Captain Holm is no ordinary villain. He had in him the capabilities of an angel. He chose to become a fiend. We will not give up the quest, Ignatia. We will search the various asylums—"

"You will not find my child," said the young mother, sorrowfully. "Captain Holm is too cunning for us. All I hope now is that we shall hear from him in time offering to let me have her on payment of a sum of money. He is reckless and extravagant, and often desperately in need of money. At some such period his revenge may yield to his necessities."

The idea was plausible, and the colonel accepted it as a prophecy.

Notwithstanding her burden of grief, the recovery of Ignatia progressed rapidly. The search for the missing child went on, but as no clue to her was discovered it was permitted to flag and at last die out. Colonel Redruth and Ignatia began to look forward with impatience to the expected hour when Captain Holm would propose to exchange his child for a sum of money, for that he would do so sooner or later had grown to be a fixed belief with them.

They did not yet know their enemy.

By September Ignatia was able to drive out, and to spend hours in the garden and on the lawn where her child had been wont to play, and where every flower reminded her of the lost little one.

It was the second week in September.

Colonel Redruth had gone up to London, to be absent for some hours on business. The afternoon was very sultry. Ignatia, clothed in white, with mourning ribbons at her throat and waist, half-reclined in the dim drawing-room. The windows were opened, but the blinds were shut. She was half asleep, or seemed so at least, when suddenly the bell beside the tall gate in the garden wall tinkled sharply. A servant hastened to open it, then came a tread upon the gravelled walk that startled the bereaved young mother almost as if it had been a summons from the dead.

"It sounds like his walk!" she murmured, beginning to tremble.

The step ascended the porch, and a pull at the house bell followed. A little later, one of the servants appeared, saying, doubtfully:

"A gentleman wishes to see you, madam."

"To see me? Show him in!" cried Ignatia, eagerly.

The servant withdrew, and ushered into the room him whom the divorced young wife expected to see—Captain Holm.

He came in jauntily, hat in hand, his graceful figure slightly bent, a cynical smile upon his handsome face. He closed the door carefully behind the servant, and approached Ignatia, still smiling, an exultant look in his eyes.

Ignatia did not arise at his approach. As he marked her pallor, her agitation, her air of feebleness, his expression changed abruptly.

"You have been ill?" he exclaimed.

"I have been for weeks at death's door," she answered. "It was your hand that brought me there!"

"Not mine, but your own," he returned. "I offered you an alternative. You may remember that you scorned me as if I had been a dog!"

"My child, Digby—where is she?"

"I have come here to talk about her," said Captain Holm, morosely. "I saw your father leave Twickenham for town, and I took advantage of his absence to pay you a last visit."

"I knew you would come!" cried Ignatia, a lovely flush leaping to her cheeks. "I knew that if no consideration of mercy for her or me should prompt your return, you would want—would want—"

"Money? I usually do want money; but just now I am in funds. My father has so far relented towards me as to make overtures which I find it to my advantage to accept," and Captain Holm flung himself indolently into a chair near that of the lady.

"He and my worthy brothers have been so scandalised by the reports of some of my proceedings, and of this last exploit as regards the child—some prying detective having been to my relatives—that he has decided to buy my continued absence from England at any price. He sent an agent to me over in Germany offering me a captain's commission in a

regiment out in Canada, and a decent annual allowance, if I would go away to return no more. I am tired of England, and should like Canada, I'm sure. My commission is bought, and is in my pocket. Perhaps you would like to see it?"

He drew from his breast-pocket a document which he unfolded, displaying it to Ignatia.

"I see," she said. "You are really going?"

"I am really going, unless you should interpose an objection," he answered, a smile like that of a satyr playing about his mouth. "I have come to inquire if you are willing I should go."

"It is nothing to me. I am no longer your wife—"

"True," and a dangerous look shot into the eyes of Captain Holm. "You are not now my wife, but you can become so. Would you, for the sake of your child—to save her from a life of toil, ignorance, and loneliness—would you take me back? Would you marry me again?"

Ignatia did not reply. She covered her face with her hands.

"You know her sensitive, loving disposition," pursued Captain Holm, permitting a gleam of exultation to shoot into his eyes. "Would you consign her to the care of strangers who would be rough and harsh with her, who would oppress her, who would bring her up as a peasant?"

"Would you suffer such a wrong to her, your own child?" asked Ignatia, not looking up.

"Would I not?" he demanded, savagely. "She has not a trait of my character—not a point of resemblance to my disposition. I never thought much of children, and this child I regard as a lever to be used in an attack upon you. She was afraid of me, and shrank from me as if I had been an ogre. You have fine feelings enough for us both. A mother, I have heard, cannot permit harm to come to her child. She will sacrifice herself to save the being to whom she gave birth. Is this mere talk, or is it true? Will you marry me to save Georgia from an existence in horrible contrast to your enlightenment, your wealth, your luxury?"

"Digby—Captain Holm—this is indeed terribly cruel—"

"Answer!"

"Not—oh, Heaven! not even to save my child, can I perjure myself before Heaven!" moaned the anguished young mother.

"You condemn her, then, to ignorance, to misery, to—"

"Digby, have mercy!"

"It is you who are merciless!" said Captain Holm, his face darkening. "Ignatia, your child lives. She is in safe hands. Search the world over and you will fail to find her. Her fate is in your own hands. Should she grow up to womanhood, she shall know that it was you who condemned her to her wretched existence. You might have given her a happy childhood; you might have taught and trained her into a noble womanhood, but you would not."

"I cannot bear it—I cannot!" wailed the young mother, throwing up her arms in a gesture of abandonment. "My baby that I would have died for—"

"But that you cannot make a sacrifice for," sneered Captain Holm. "Madam, am I to consider your decision as irrevocable?"

"Yes," she answered, moaning. "Not to save her life can I marry you again. But I have money. I will pay you any sum you may demand if you will restore her to me. She is your own child, Digby. Would you condemn her to the life you have pictured? You cannot be guilty of such an infamy."

"You don't know me," he said, with an oath, arising. "I have your answer then for all time? You will not save your child?"

"I cannot at the price of my own soul."

"Then save your precious soul at the expense of your own offspring," cried Captain Holm, savagely.

"I can be as merciless to her as you can. I sail for Canada in a fortnight's time. As the continuance of my allowance depends upon my remaining there, I shall not return to England for many years, unless indeed I should get into some scrape that might require me to seek another climate. We part, however, madam, to meet again. In the fulness of time I shall return, and I may have the felicity of yet presenting your own child to you. You were of a charitable turn, I remember. Possibly in succouring some dingy beggar in London streets you may yet succour your own child. Possibly, if you could look under the hideous cap of some member of a charity school you might recognise the golden head of your darling shaven like a convict's. Perhaps—but your own heart will suggest sufficient possibilities. But of one thing rest assured—all the detectives in England cannot find her! You refused to save her. Her doom be on your head!"

He raised his hat mockingly and went out, slamming the house door after him, leaving his last words ringing in Ignatia's ears like the knell of doom.

(To be continued.)

My Own Granny, Dear.

Words by T. H. BAYLY.

BALLAD.

The Music arranged
by T. MILLAR.
and adapted to this Work.

VOICE. *Lively.*

Cries Wil - liam, when just come from
An - nette flew to wel - come him

PIANO. *f* *p*

sen, "Does a - ny one know my An - nette? Oh, say, is she faith - ful to me? A - las! it is long since we
home, But he turn'd from the maid with dis - dain; "False girl, I sup - pose you are come To jeer me and laugh at my

met." "Yes, yes," an old gossip re - plies, "We all know her very well here; She has red lips and bonny blue
pain; Since scandal has blotted your name, I deem you unworthy a tear; I've been told by an el - der - ly

eyes, And she lives with her own Gran - ny dear." "Granna - dier! did you say? did you say Gran - na - dier?" "Yes,
dame, That you live with your own Gran - na - dier!" "Granny dear! did you say? did you say Gran - ny dear?" "I'm

lento.

yes," the old gos - sip re - plies, "She lives with her own Gran - ny dear.".....
told by an el - der - ly dame, That you live with your own Gran - na - dier!".....

colla parte.

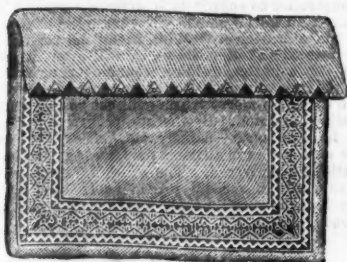
Quoth pretty Annette, "Do you dare
To call me inconstant and frail?
Beware, Master William, beware!
How you trump up an old woman's tale.
'Tis true, when such stories are told,
We should not believe half that we hear,

Yet, I own that my Granny is old,
So I live with my own Granny dear.
Granny dear! Granny dear! my own Granny dear.
Yet I own that my Granny is old,
So I live with my own Granny dear.

COVER FOR A PILLOW IN CROCHET AND VENETIAN EMBROIDERY, WORK BAG, &c., &c.

COVER FOR A PILLOW.—Nos. 1, 2, 4 & 5.
(Evans's Boar's Head Cotton, No. 16.)

Cut the cover in fine linen and trim it with strips of embroidery or with lace in crochet. No. 1 is trimmed with lace in fine thread crochet; No. 5 with Venetian embroidery. Of this cover No. 4 gives a



COVER FOR A PILLOW.—No. 1.

part in the actual size required. The trimming is in linen tastefully embroidered. Trace the design on the linen, arrange fine guipure braid in squares, the crossing of which is secured with fine embroidered spots. Work the button-holes in flat-stitch and edge them with languette.

FANCY BAG.—No. 3.

This bag is of black cloth, embroidered in point Russe in various colours, lined with green silk.

KNITTED LACE.

(Evans's Knitting Cotton, No. 12.)

CAST on 8 stitches.

1st row.—Slip 1, 2 plain, over, purl 2 together, 1 plain, over twice, 2 plain.

2nd row.—Slip 1, 2 plain, 1 purl on the second turn of the over of last, 3 plain, over, purl 2 together, 1 plain.

3rd row.—Slip 1, 2 plain, over, purl 2 together, 5 plain.

4th row.—Slip 1, 6 plain, over, purl 2 together, 1 plain.

5th row.—Slip 1, 2 plain, over, purl 2 together, 1 plain, over twice, purl 2 together, over twice, 2 plain.

6th row.—Slip 1, 2 plain, 1 purl on second turn of over, 2 plain, 1 purl, 3 plain, over, purl 2 together, 1 plain.

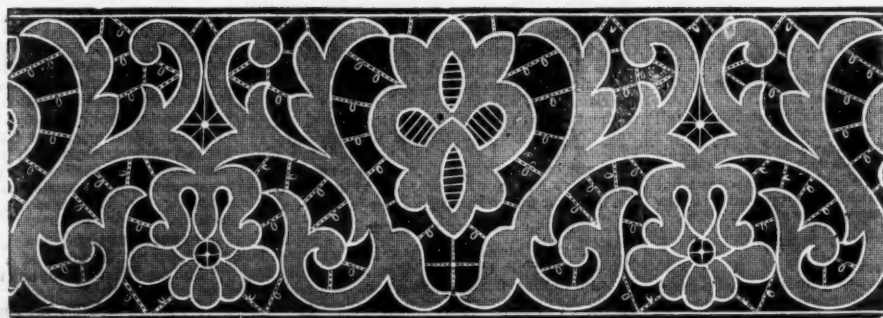
7th row.—Slip 1, 2 plain, over, purl 2 together, 5 plain, purl 2 together, 1 plain.

8th row.—Cast off 4, 4 plain, over, purl 2 together, 1 plain. Repeat from 1st row till you have the length required.

TATTED INSERTION.

(Evans's Boar's Head Cotton, No. 20.)

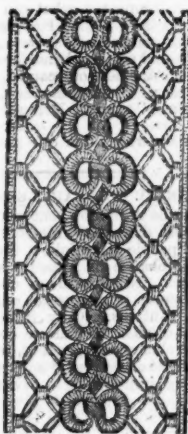
For a useful insertion two threads are required for the outer rows. Two rows of circles are worked first in the following manner: Commence a ring with the shuttle and work 1 double, 1 purl, then 2 double, 1 purl 14 times, 1 double, draw up. Repeat this ring close to the last, and fasten off neatly when finished, then work two more rings in the same manner, joining the first ring in the 7th purl stitch to the corresponding stitch in the last ring worked. Work the length required in this manner, then join the two threads together and knot them into the centre purl on the first ring, and work over the second thread 3 double, 1 purl, then 2 double, 1 purl 4 times, 3 double, draw up, and draw the second thread through the centre purl stitch of the next ring; work the whole row in this manner, then repeat it on the other side of the ring. The second stripe is worked in exactly the same manner, but in the first outside row join the stripe to the last one worked by drawing the second, third, and 4th purl stitches on the scallops through the corresponding stitches of the row on the 1st stripe.



VENETIAN EMBROIDERY. (PART OF A PILLOW IN FULL SIZE.)—No. 4.

FASHIONS.

SUITS.—A late opening at a large and tasteful furnishing house displayed many beautiful costumes. Rich silks of pale, delicate tints, light silks, goat's-hair poplins, wool serges, pongees, piqués, coloured linen, and batiste costumes, were the stylish fabrics made up in the most graceful manner. Tight-fitting



CROCHET-WORK OF PILLOW.—No. 2.

garments, such as postilion basques and polonaises—minus a loose wrap—prevailed. The present fashion displays fine figures most advantageously. Waists are made slightly longer, and always show the natural curve of the figure above the hips. Shoulder seams are short and high, falling in with

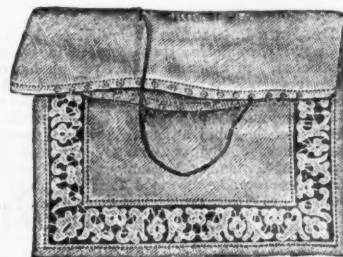


FANCY BAG.—No. 3.

the line of the shoulders. All sleeves, whether coat or flowing, are shaped at the top like a man's coat-sleeve, and set smoothly in the ample armhole, without any fullness but that which comes of holding the sleeve next the sewer. Three or four bows up the

The basque, a novelty, has no pleats behind, but a folded point like a hood is continued from the back, to fall over broad smooth pieces formed by elongating the side bodies. Another, of turtle-dove gray, is similarly made, and trimmed with black lace. A third, gros grain, fit array for a bride, is a soft French gray, trimmed with ruffles of the same and fringe to match, making a tasteful monotone costume.

LINEN SUITS.—Suits of thick undressed linen without gloss, and looking when bought as they will look after being washed at home, are shown for ser-



COVER FOR A PILLOW.—No. 5.

viceable wear. They are made precisely in the way described for piqué, and are trimmed with kilt pleating, the pleats scant and separate—not lapping as they formerly did—and headed by bias bands, not folds, stitched at intervals on the skirt. A tiny line of scarlet or brown worsted braid, or the most fold of coloured cambric, stitched in on each side of these bands, gives them a less sombre appearance. Unbleached Cluny laces and insertions and flax linen fringes are also used on linen suits. If the lace and fringe are merely coloured to match the linen, they are almost sure to fade, but the unbleached linen trimmings do not become paler. Readers in the country, who cannot examine the ready-made suits at town furnishing houses, declare trimming with bias bands of linen, piqué, or other washing goods, impracticable. Now a fashion writer is nothing if not practical in the styles she quotes, and we assure our friends that there is no difficulty in making or in ironing these bands, provided they are cut perfectly bias, laid absolutely smooth on the articles to which they are to be sewed, and stitched carefully near each edge by machine with well-adjusted tension—neither too tight nor too loose. The fancy for close-fitting garments has introduced linen and white Victoria lawn suits, made with postilion basques. Such suits are worn in the house as well as in the street.

BATISTE SUITS.—A few suits of batiste are shown, and a small quantity of the material is found. We mean the real batiste, genuine flax in its original state, forming unbleached brown linen lawn, and not the spurious fabric mixed with silk hitherto called batiste.

GRENADINE COSTUMES.—There is nothing now exhibited in grenadine suits. They should be made over silk skirts, but those who cannot afford silk use alpaca and sometimes soft, thick cambric that has not gloss enough to betray it. The thick silk over which the basque is made is the proper lining. But few persons now use drilling lining with thin silk covering next the grenadine. Indeed, silk linings for corsages are gaining favour, and are not considered extravagant, as they wear well, sit smoothly to the figure, and are far pleasanter to wear than linen or twilled cotton. Many ruffles merely hemmed, with a fold of gros grain laid in the hem or else edged with lace, are the fashionable trimmings.

DINNER DRESSES.

—A dinner dress worthy of description is of turquoise blue gros grain, with demi-train. Two bias ruffles six inches deep, the lower one in box-pleats, the upper gathered and lapping over the lower, headed by a bias band and three narrow standing ruffles trim the lower skirt. The upper skirt has a single ruffle, headed by two erect frills on the back of the skirt, while a netted fringe takes the place of the lower ruffle on the apron. The basque, without

front of the basque are used quite as much as buttons. Handsomest amongst costumes is a gros grain of bluish-green, made elaborate with black lace. The garniture on the lower skirt is broad box-pleats at wide intervals, with a bow and shell-like curves of lace between. The apron-front bouffant overskirt has crescent-shaped pieces and lace for trimming.

pleats behind, has a ruffle and fringe round the edge. The neck is square, and the front represents a vest almost covered by a jabot of Valenciennes lace. Flowing sleeves with a ruffle and lace. A dress made in the same way is of pale corn silk, trimmed with broad black velvet ribbon and point duchesse lace. The first dress described, or a similar one of fisherman's green, or of light plum-colour, is the fashionable reception dress for blondes. Ecu buff silks, or the faint China pink, or else the pinkish-salmon apricot-colour are the choice of brunettes.

HYDROPHOBIA.

DR. JOHN P. GARRISH lately delivered a lecture upon "Hydrophobia, its history, symptoms, and treatment," in which he said hydrophobia occurs more frequently in northern than in southern latitudes. The susceptibility of contagion from rabies is confined mostly to a period of seven weeks after the bite of the rabid animal. As the largest number of cases of hydrophobia are reported in the months of September, November, and December, it may, therefore, be assumed that the majority of victims are bitten during the dog days. The bite of a dog that is merely angry and not rabid does not, in Dr. Garrish's opinion, engender hydrophobia. The poison is rarely communicated to the system where the animal bites through the clothes. In order that the malady shall be developed, it is necessary that the saliva of the dog must come in contact with the wounded or abraded surface.

When one has been bitten by a dog, the animal should not be killed on suspicion of rabidness, but kept confined, in order that the physician may construe subsequent symptoms of the patient. Fits are conclusive evidence that the dog is not mad. The rabid dog does not shun the water. He will lap it, but he cannot take large swallows by reason of the invariable paralysis of the muscles about the jaws and throat, a sign by which madness can always be detected. Hydrophobia fully developed in the human system is incurable. But if treated before the period of "incubation," as it is called, has passed by (which varies from three to seven weeks) the poison may be eliminated from the system.

One of the physicians in attendance at the lecture, Dr. Alexander Steri, mentioned that the celebrated Dr. Youatt, whose works on the domestic animal were well known, was bitten thirteen times by rabid animals, once on the lip by a rabid cat, and that he had himself been bitten by a mad dog only two years ago. In these cases the cure had been effected by immediate excision of the parts and cauterisation.

Dr. Garrish inclined to regard the vapour bath as the most efficient remedy for hydrophobia, and condemned the use of stimulants in all cases of venomous bites. In the opening part of his lecture Dr. Garrish referred to the causes of hydrophobia as a mystery, wholly unknown for many years, and still imperfectly understood. There can be little doubt that in many cases it is the result of the artificial life which dogs lead as human companions in the state of the highest civilisation. In South America, where the dogs live in a state of nature, the malady is unknown. Shut out from the society of his kind, in the house or upon the lawn of his master, the poor dog is driven into the rabid condition by man's ignorantly cruel inattention to his wants. Muzzles and canine solitude produce more cases of rabies than the summer heat.

We fully coincide in the conclusions arrived at, and we have long entertained the opinion that the unreasoning fears of men, and the unwise measures adopted to prevent hydrophobia, very frequently cause this justly dreaded disease. To hamper a dog during the intense heat of August with muzzles, is an ingenious device for torturing, and often, when a poor animal, heated and suffering, wanders hither and thither, vainly seeking relief, he is pursued with hue and cry and then killed.

So far as we know, leading medical authorities all concur in the opinion expressed in the foregoing article, and while we most earnestly hope that some effective preventive of this most terrible malady may be discovered by medical science, we can but reiterate our conviction that the precautions now generally adopted are worse than useless.

SCANDAL.

WHAT a horrible thing is scandal! what a cruel, wicked thing! so often a direct violation of the commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

Even where there is real evil to expose, one should pause a while before the utterance of words which may drive the sinner to greater evil. But what shall we say of one who can tell a deliberate lie, or repeat that which conscience tells her was the fabrication of another's brain? I say "her" because scandal is woman's greatest fault. I know hardly any who can refrain from promulgating a wicked

story, even though salve is added to the conscience by a "I don't believe it, poor thing!"

Ah! pause, good little woman, before you drive the arrow into some sister's soul. Pause and reflect. You and I may never have erred as this poor soul has; yet were we circumstanced as she has been, should we be what we are? If we help to drag a poor, wronged being downward by a lie, doubled, perhaps, as it is repeated, what can we expect when our hearts lie bare before Heaven? How can we hold ourselves guiltless of any wrong that may come of the fiery brand we have handed onward? Heaven keep me from the sin of scandal as from that of theft or murder. I had rather say, "I have stolen this man's purse" than "I have robbed that woman of her fair fame;" for the latter loss is far the greatest, as we who value our good names know well. M. K. D.

DISEASE AND CARELESSNESS.

THERE can be no doubt that carelessness is the origin of most diseases. Medical men also hold that foolish people who follow their own whims have hardly a chance of recovery when visited by serious disease. Nine-tenths of the doctor's work would be done if people were only consistently prudent and cautious. Only it is so hard to be habitually cautious. On many occasions a man may be most elaborately prudent, then, to his utter astonishment, he dangerously imperils his health by some startling impropriety. When he has used every imaginable pains he is always amenable to the force of accident. There is another plausible theory, antagonistic to the one we have named, to the effect that every man has the seeds of some particular disease in his constitution, and some trifling accident will come, sooner or later, which will have for him the same effect as a match falling upon gunpowder.

Medical men explain this on theories of constitutional tendencies, or of some poison latent in the system. The fatal accident to one man is the merest accident for another. Two men while walking get well soaked by the rain. One man shakes off the water pretty much as a dog or a duck might do, and rather enjoys his shower bath than not. The other man is taken ill of inflammation of the lungs, and probably dies. The doctors cannot explain the different issues, and they would be also very much puzzled to give a satisfactory account of the phenomenon itself. They will indeed generally explain theories more or less plausible, and practice has been built upon theory, and theory has, no doubt, sacrificed a number of lives. Yet medicine must have its dogmatic system, and without it medicine becomes little better than empiricism.

NECESSARY RULES FOR SLEEP.

THERE is no fact more clearly established in the physiology of man than this, that the brain expends its energies and itself during the hours of wakefulness, and that these are recuperated during sleep. If the recuperation does not equal the expenditure, the brain withers—this is insanity. Thus it is that, in early English history, persons who were condemned to death by being prevented from sleeping always died raving maniacs; thus it is also that those who are starved to death become insane—the brain is not nourished and they cannot sleep.

The practical inferences are three: 1st. Those who think most, who do the most brain work, require the most sleep. 2nd. The time "saved" from necessary sleep is infallibly destructive to mind, body, and estate. 3rd. Give yourself, your children, your servants, give all that are under you, the fullest amount of sleep they will take, by compelling them to go to bed at some regular, early hour, and to rise in the morning the moment they wake; and within a fortnight, Nature, with almost the regularity of the rising sun, will unloose the bonds of sleep the moment enough repose has been secured for the wants of the system. This is the only safe and efficient rule; and as to the question how much sleep any one requires, each must be a rule for himself—great Nature will never fail to write it out to the observer under the regulation just given.

MILITARY REORGANISATION IN FRANCE.—The France says that the Sub-Commission on Military Recruiting has finished its work. According to article 1, the military service is obligatory for all Frenchmen from 20 to 40 years of age. Article 2 fixes the length of service in the army at four years. Three categories of reserves are established, the first of five, the second of three, and the third of eight years' service. The executive power can mobilise the army and the first category of the reserve by a simple decree. To mobilise the last two categories a law is required.

GEORGE THE FOURTH IN IRELAND.—George the Fourth visited Ireland in 1821. A day or two

before the termination of the visit, a messenger from the castle waited on all the traders who had been favoured with orders for goods for the king's personal use, and informed them that his majesty was so well pleased with his reception and with the country that he had expressed his resolution to repeat his visit the following year. The announcement was received, of course, with great satisfaction, as the king had been liberal in his orders and unusually prompt in his payments. The messenger then proceeded to inquire whether the trader would wish his establishment to be again selected by the comptroller to supply such articles as might be required on the occasion. Of course the answer was in the affirmative. "Well, then," he replied, "to obviate all risk of mistake, we will appoint you his majesty's hatter, saddler, ironmonger, or so forth, as the case might be, and if you call at my office in the castle to-morrow you will get your patent formally completed. By-the-bye, there is a trifling fee to be paid on it—namely, 10*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*" Of course the money was in all cases paid, and the parchments faithfully delivered. The king, however, we need hardly say, never did return to Ireland, and the parchments were the only return ever made for the money.

FACTETIE.

A COQUETTE is said to be a perfect incarnation of Cupid, as she keeps her beak in a quiver.

The proper material for war balloons—Shot silk, of course.

Why does a woman residing up two pairs of stairs remind you of a goddess? Because she's a second-floorer.

Does a man "marry a fortune" when he weds a girl with golden hair, diamond-like eyes, silvery voice, ruby lips, and teeth of pearls?

CUTTING.

Frugal Landlady of Boarding House: "Coming home to dinner, Mr. Brown?"

Hearty Boarder: "Well, perhaps; if I don't feel hungry."

SOLVING A DIFFICULTY.—An Irish girl told her forbidden lover she was longing to possess his portrait, and intended to obtain it. "But how if your friends see it?" "Ah, but I'll tell the artist not to make it like you, so they won't know it."

CAUSE AND EFFECT.—"It is a settled principle, your honour," said a lawyer, "that causes always produce effects." "They always do for the attorney," blandly responded the judge; "but I've sometimes known a single case to deprive a client of all his effects!"

"LOVES OF THE STARS."—Poets are very fond of expatiating on the above elevated theme, but we can only say, as regards the only Stars we are personally acquainted with—theatrical Stars—that, far from their cherishing any immortal loves, they mortally hate each other.—*Punch*.

DISCOURAGING.—An eccentric banker was eyeing with suspicion a bill presented to him for discount. "You need not fear," said the palpitating customer; "one of the party keeps his carriage." "Ah!" rejoined the banker, "I shall be glad if he keeps his feet."

A YOUNG ensign of a regiment, residing in a room which was very small, was visited by one of his fashionable friends, who, on taking leave, said, "Well, Charles, how much longer do you mean to stop in this nut-shell?" To whom he replied, "Until I become a kernel."

A NEW CALLING.—"What is your business?" said the judge the other morning to a prisoner. "I'm an observationist." "What's that?" "One who looks round during the daytime to see what he can steal at night, if it please your honour." It did not please his honour, so he sent the observationist to prison for a period of fourteen days.

EXTREME POLITENESS.—You have your pocket picked. Your purse is taken. It contains gold, silver, stamps, cards with your name and address, and memoranda useless but to your yourself. The memoranda are returned to you in an envelope.—"With Mr. W. Sikas Fagin's compliments."—*Punch*.

EXCELLENT REASONS FOR CARRYING AN UMBRELLA.

Pipkin: "Not much of a shower?"

Smith: "Not much, but why do you carry your umbrella up?"

Pipkin: "It helps my complexion; and why do you?"

Smith: "For the same; my friends all tell me I look best when I keep a little shady. Ha! ha!"

CENSUS RETURN EXTRAORDINARY.—The following is a verbatim transcript of the census return handed in by a resident in the county of Meath:—"My name is Jonney Dooley I is a fiddler by me trade I plays on sundays for the Boys & Girls of the place, I am married to Judy biggie she is me wife. I have too doters on Belongin to me & the other

Belongs to Judy afore I merid her. I is a Roman Catholic, and Judy is the same to the Back Bone, this is all I can say about us, sined Jonney dooley."

REASONING BY ANALOGY.

Cecil (who is in the habit of surreptitiously dissecting his sister's dolls): "Oh, Aunt! I declare if here isn't a great big 'normous heap of sawdust! How very, very dreadful!"

Aunt: "Dreadful, darling! Why?"
Cecil: "Why, the lots of men and women that must have been killed here, you know!"—Punch.

"CHILL OCTOBER."

Each weary M.P. would be fitting,
Each Minister's worked off his legs;
Yet when was there so long a sitting
That to chickens has brought so few eggs?

Is't your Spring and your Summer of adding,
For an Autumn of adding makes fain,
That you call on tired Members, skedaddling,
To meet in October again?—Punch.

THE SLANG OF THE DAY.

(Fragment of Fashionable Conversation.)

Youth: "A—awful hot, ain't it?"
Maiden: "Yes, awful!" (Pause.)
Youth: "A—awful jolly floor for dancing, ain't it?"

Maiden: "Yes, awful!" (Pause.)
Youth: "A—awful jolly sad about the poor duchess, ain't it?"

Maiden: "Yes—quite too awful—" (And so forth).—Punch.

HOW TO DISPOSE OF A SUITOR.—A young man, whose moustache is visible by the aid of a microscope, was the victim of misplaced confidence a short time ago. He had been particularly sweet on a very young lady, and had previously paid her several visits. The girl's parents, thinking both too young to begin to keep company with each other, gave a gentle hint to that effect—first by calling the girl out of the room, and sending her to bed; and, secondly, by the lady of the house bringing into the room a huge slice of bread and butter, with jam attachment, and saying to the youth, in her kindest manner: "There, take this, and go home; it is a long way, and your mother will be anxious."

ABSENCE OF MIND.—A literary man, famous among his friends for his fits of absence of mind, on returning one day from a visit, missed his snuff-box. He instantly sat down and wrote to the friend whose house he had just left, asking him to look for the box and send it by the bearer. Just as he was about despatching the messenger he found the box in his pocket, upon which he tore open the note and added a postscript to the effect that his friend need give himself no trouble as the box was found, then resealed and sent it. His wife began to remonstrate with him on the absurdity of the action, when he silenced her with: "Woman, have you no consideration? Do you suppose I would let my friend turn his house upside down looking for my box when I had it in my pocket?"

THE FAIR CRITIC CAUGHT.—The following story is told of a celebrated belle. In company with several friends she was examining a fine picture gallery and admiring the beautiful paintings as only the intelligent and refined admire works of art. Finally she approached a group of paintings, in the centre of which was a large looking-glass which reflected the young lady's full-length picture. One of the gentlemen pointing to it, said: "See, Miss Laura, what a splendid picture." "Yes," she said, glancing at it hurriedly, and not perceiving that it was her own reflection, "it is a passable painting, but the subject is homely." "Indeed, are you in earnest?" "Certainly, quite a fright." "Look at it again." She did; but it is curious to observe that since then a noticeable coolness has sprung up between the young lady and her admirer.

NO WORK, NO TURTLE.

At a special Court of Common Council held the other day in Guildhall, Mr. T. Bedford, in a vigorous speech, strongly animadverted on the indifference to public feeling manifested by Government in their slackness to take measures for the preservation of Epping Forest, and for vindicating public claims with respect to the Thames Embankment. The Lord Mayor presided on this occasion, and might have had offered to him a suggestion which, if adopted, would be very likely indeed to quicken the action of Ministers in the above-named particulars, and all other matters affecting the rights of the British public and the citizens of London. So long as any Government remains backwards in coming forward to do what it ought, let the Lord Mayor of London desist from inviting Her Majesty's Ministers to dinner.—Punch.

A COURT SCENE.

It is natural for man to indulge an appetite that affords him pleasure. So frequently in many cases has this been done that what at first was innocent by constant indulgence becomes vice. It has been so with Patrick O'Reardon, and he now puts in an

appearance before the Recorder on the charge of habitual drunkenness.

"Will you persist in drinking, Pat?" said the magistrate.

"Faith, you may well say that; I'd get thirsty if I didn't."

"Then you don't drink when you are thirsty, but only in fear that you may become so?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you think whiskey is better than water?"

"It's stronger, sir."

"But do you think it's as good?"

"Oh, yes, sir; because you can mix them, and the whiskey kills the impurities in the water."

"But what kills the impurities in the whiskey?" asked the court.

"Nothing at all—it does all the killin' itself," he replied triumphantly, and looked very much as if he had established a proposition that admitted of no denial.

THE WAY-SIDE SPRING.

Just at the grassy verge of the road,
Beneath a spreading oak,
The little spring opened its sparkling eye
With a soft, inviting look;
And scarcely a traveller bent his lip
To its gentle welcoming
But raised his eyes in gratitude,
And blessed the little spring.

The footsore tramp there cheered his way;
The pedlar there would take
His load from his back, and pause a while,
His burning thirst to slake;
And at noon the workmen in the fields
Came under the old oak tree,
And interchanged their simple jests
As they drank the waters free.

Whenever I roda with my father to town
A tin cup we would bring,
And always stop to fill it high
At the little wayside spring.
Or when I was gathering berries near
I climbed the fence to sip
Its waters cool, with a grateful heart
And a very thirsty lip.

No waters have ever seemed so sweet,
Though I've wandered far and wide,
As the spring that opened its shining eye
By the dusty old wayside.
I would that time and my life were one,
Backward afar to wing
To the sweetness and joy I knew of old
By the little wayside spring.

'Tis the type of a happy innocence
That can be nevermore;
And oft, in the dusty road of life,
As I falter, weary and sore,
I long for the reassuring glance,
The soft, inviting look,
Of the sparkling little water eye
Beneath the spreading oak.

N. A. U.

GEMS.

THE water that flows from a spring does not congeal in winter. And those sentiments of friendship which flow from the heart cannot be frozen in adversity.

THE happiness of man arises more from his inward than outward condition; and the amount of good in the world cannot be much increased but by increasing the amount of goodness.

AS the least breath of wind, after a bountiful shower of rain, causes the drops to fall in abundance from the swaying leaves of trees and flowers, so, when the heart is full, how little does it take to wring the scalding tears therefrom and flood the heavy eye.

WISDOM consists in arming ourselves with fortitude sufficient for enabling us to support hardships when they unavoidably happen.

THE best thing to be done when evil comes upon us is not lamentation, but action; not to sit and suffer, but to rise and seek the remedy.

WOULD you have influence with those who look to you for guidance and instruction? Bear with you the law of kindness. Would you command their respect? Let your words, though they may inflict pain for the time, drop kindly from your lips.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

COMMON salt is recommended for the extermination of ants.

STAINS from acids can be removed by spirits of hartshorn diluted. Repeat if necessary. Rinse off with water.

CEMENT FOR METAL AND GLASS.—The following cement will firmly attach any metallic substance

to glass or porcelain:—Mix two ounces of a thick solution of glue with one ounce of linseed oil varnish, or three-fourths of an ounce of Venice turpentine; boil them together, stirring them until they mix as thoroughly as possible. The pieces cemented should be tied together for two or three days.

TOMATO SOUP.—Two pounds and a half of veal or lamb, one gallon of water, two quarts fresh tomatoes, peeled, and cut up fine. Boil the meat to shreds, and the water down to two quarts. Strain the liquor, put in the tomatoes, stirring them very hard, that they may dissolve thoroughly. Boil half an hour. Season with parsley, or any other herb you may prefer, and with pepper and salt. Strain again and stir in a tablespoonful of white sugar, before putting into the tureen.

STATISTICS.

TAKING the French war indemnity in its English shape of 200,000,000*l.*, payable in gold, it appears that the sovereigns composing it would weigh 1,568 tons 17 cwt. 2 qrs. 5 5-7lb. Piled one upon the other, they would reach a height of 197 miles 2 furlongs 11 poles 1 yard 2 feet 2 inches. Placed edge to edge, they would extend 2,762 miles nearly; used for paving, they would cover more than 10 acres of ground; melted down, they would make a mass containing 2,811 cubic feet of solid metal; and, finally, supposing one man to count them over at the rate of 100 a minute for twelve hours a day, it would take him over 222 days to complete his task.

BULLION AND SPECIE.—The imports and exports of gold and silver bullion and specie registered at the Custom-house in the first half of the year 1871 have been unusually large. The imports amounted to 19,715,363*l.*, both the gold and the silver reaching more than double the amount of the corresponding period of either of the two preceding years. The import of gold and silver from the United States amounted to 7,595,325*l.*; the import of gold from Australia amounted to 3,418,834*l.* The export of gold and silver in the half-year reached 10,660,474*l.*, leaving an excess of import over export amounting to 5,648,544*l.* gold and 3,406,278*l.* silver. The export of gold and silver included 2,694,347*l.* to Germany, and 3,167,500*l.* to Belgium, but only 1,045,203*l.* to France.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE London School Board has decided to borrow 100,000*l.* for building a hundred and twenty schools.

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS.—The second of the two chief Highland gatherings—Braemar—will be held on the 7th of September.

THE young Duke of Norfolk is celebrating his arrival at years of discretion by spending 100,000*l.* on the erection of a magnificent cathedral at Arundel.

THE Empress Charlotte, widow of the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian, is still at Laeken, but her state, instead of improving, is daily growing worse.

ONE of the many remarkable facts of the day is the announcement that an accomplished lady teacher is wanted to educate the ladies of the palace of Mysore.

THE greatest fortune-teller in Paris, whom the Empress is said to have frequently consulted, has recently died, and left a remarkable and copious diary. It is to be published! How pleasant for some!

THERE is a great deal of theology in the idea of the little girl who wished she could be good without obeying her grandmother. She said it was easy enough to read books and pray, but pretty hard to mind grandmother.

A CURIOUS CHALLENGE.—On Wednesday week a gentleman in Elgin, who is a capital velocipedit, ran a race with his bicycle against a horse at full trot, yoked in a machine. The stake was 10*l.* a side, and the distance two miles along the Lhanbryde road. The horse came in first by three-quarters of a minute, the time occupied by the winner being seven minutes and a quarter.

A TERRIBLE THREAT.—Mr. George Francis Train told his audience, in the course of a lecture at Cork on Friday week, that he had a claim of 100,000*l.* against the British Government which they refused to pay. But if the amount should not be paid within twenty-four hours of his election as President of the United States, he said he "would hang the English Minister on a lamp-post opposite the White House."

SWIMMING BATH FOR SOLDIERS.—An order was issued to the troops in Woolwich announcing that one of the large shipbuilding docks in the disused dockyard at Woolwich had been cleared out and fitted up as a swimming bath for the use of the soldiers. It will accommodate 300 at a time. A second dock, to accommodate 400 men at a time, will soon be opened as a bath. We hope the men will be taught swimming.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREDERICO.—Your announcement has been inserted without fee, which is never required.

ANXIOUS.—You should make experiments in the manner you have described.

G. W. G.—We will cause inquiry to be made and accommodate you if possible.

S. S.—You took the proper course and should consider the affair at an end. Any application for a summons will be fruitless.

ISAAC C.—You have doubtless discovered that your wishes have been complied with. Some little time necessarily elapses. No payment is required.

MILDERED.—A little medicine is all you require. Of what description a chemist will say, after asking you a question or two about your usual habits.

C. C. W.—We have had no opportunity to peruse your productions. They are, we fear, likely to remain on the table for some time.

C. O.—Take plenty of out-door-air exercise, and use your spare time in the pursuit of some athletic sport suitable to your strength.

A. N.—"Olive's Trust" was omitted in No. 420 in consequence of the temporary indisposition of the author. The tale was however resumed and concluded in No. 421.

E. G. S.—One inch depth of rain falling on an acre of ground will amount in all to 226,225 gallons, or about 100 tons in weight.

AN ANXIOUS ONE.—The letter is carelessly written, and contains two orthographical errors. It is dangerous to remove hair from the face by means of chemical applications.

N. O'D.—The individual referred to is free either to remain in England or to go abroad. "The world is all before him where to choose his place of rest, and Providence his guide."

BELLA AND ANNIE.—Both locks of hair appear to be the same colour, that is a lightish brown. As we have often said, the announcements in question are inserted for the accommodation of our readers free of charge.

ARTIE.—Technically the lines are not quite so good as they might be. They breathe also a somewhat impatient spirit. There may be other work for you yet to do before you can enjoy the longed-for rest and the coveted reunion.

GEMS OF MELODY.—Just forget about the past, with all its irrevocable harm. Be now true to the voice of conscience and duty, and remember that good air, nourishing food taken at regular hours, and proper exercise are invaluable aids to health.

KATY.—The sentiment of the piece is admirable, and the diction, with one or two exceptions, good; but both are rendered comparatively ineffective by the way in which the words are placed. You have indeed made the ends of the lines rhyme, but their construction for all that is faulty.

MECHANIC.—A piece of magnesium wire, having a diameter of 1-1000th of an inch emits a light equal to that afforded by seventy-four candles made of stearine and weighing five to the pound. The intensity of the magnesium light is equal to nearly 1-130th of that afforded by the sun on a bright November day.

ZERO.—Forty lives were lost by the calamitous accident which took place on the ornamental water in Regent's Park on the 15th of January, 1867. It was computed that about five hundred persons were skating or otherwise diverting themselves on the ice at the time, two hundred of whom became suddenly immersed, but the majority were fortunately rescued.

A. M. K.—The state of things disclosed in your letter appears to be rather extraordinary. Your cousin is in rightful possession of the deeds and property. You should employ a solicitor, first to prove your uncle's will, then to take any steps which may be necessary to protect your alleged reversionary interest. If your description is correct, the will is an unusual one.

ROGER.—The editor thinks it a very cruel thing to exhibit babies in the way Roger proposes. Babies are to be carefully tended and trained, for what culture and attention they have received will be "showed" in their after life. For a child to form a portion of an exhibition must be injurious to its future interests. The serious nature of "influence" should be always present to a good parent's thoughts.

A WORKMAN.—It is said that an effective method of preventing the decay of stone surfaces has been invented by Mr. J. Spiller, of the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich. The mode of procedure is very simple. It consists in washing them with a solution, in water, of superphosphate

of lime. It has been, we believe, successfully tried on several public buildings, exposed to the impure gases, smoke, etc., of towns.

MICHAEL D.—Camphor, as is well known, is chiefly obtained from the wood of a species of laurel; it also exists in many other plants, even in this country. By mixing oil of turpentine with hydrochloric acid, in a vessel surrounded with ice, a solid artificial camphor may be obtained, having the smell of the ordinary article. This preparation has recently been put to several useful purposes in organic chemistry.

A COUNTRYMAN.—The intense heat of July and August, 1868, dried up most of the ponds ordinarily employed to water cattle. Were such stores of water protected by trees, a vast quantity of the liquid might be preserved in the hottest summer. In forty days an unprotected pond will lose by evaporation out of 14,000 gallons about 9,000, which are sufficient to supply a flock of sheep for that period. Willows, which grow rapidly on the edges of streams, might thus be advantageously employed by the farmer to protect his standing stores of water.

MYRA.—If you have friends who can and will maintain you in London for a few months and pay the fees to enable you to learn telegraphy, it may be advisable for you to make the effort. The fees are comparatively small; the question of maintenance is the great difficulty. There is no examination, properly so called, to be passed, but of course your efficiency would be tested. The salary given to proficient is remunerative, and the employment is respectable. A situation is obtained when a vacancy arises, not as a matter of course. Your handwriting will do.

ISMAEL MARSH.—Your sonnets contain a good many lines which are unintelligible or nonsensical. What other epithet can be applied to "sweet Heaven's gates at the purring breath," which is not the severest example that could be selected in support of our opinion? You have vainly laboured to set forth the charms of your mistress by many phrases to which no just interpretation can be given, and you try to say notwithstanding that it is "her heart's beauty you alone adore." Such a mass of foolish expressions, contradictory, high-sounding, but without meaning, from the way in which they have been united by you, it has seldom fallen to our lot to read.

LOVE'S CONQUEST.

I swore to be single for ever and aye,
No damsel I'd take for my wife,
Like a lord of creation I'd still hold the sway,
And lead a good bachelor's life.
I'd scarce made my mind up when, lo and behold!
There to my delight and surprise,
Sweet Polly appeared, not in diamonds and gold,
But the gems that she wore were her eyes.

Those beauteous orbs with soft-loving flame
A conquest have made of my heart,
And don't I oft sigh for a day I could name
When united we'll never more part.
I care not for wealth if Heaven grant us health
To battle with life's stormy weather,
And when Heaven decrees to leave this weary earth
May we go the long journey together.
R. R. N.

WALTER.—The method of obtaining water by inserting tubes in the earth, as proposed during the Abyssinian Expedition of 1868, is by no means new, having been employed in a modified form for drawing brine from salt springs for fourteen years past in America. The plan is that of driving into the earth a pipe of small bore (pointed at the lower end and pierced with holes) by a kind of pile-driving process. Earth and sand first enter the pipe, followed by water, the pebbles exterior to the pointed end of the pipe in the earth acting as a kind of natural filter, excluding the entrance of more dirt after the first has been pumped out.

W. E. R.—The art of preserving human bodies by the process of embalming was most successfully practised by the Egyptians, as the mummies now so abundantly found attest, the bodies having escaped putrefaction during a lapse of three thousand years. Recent experiments by Professor Seely have produced interesting results. A human body was treated with carbolic acid (a product of coal tar), and after a lapse of a hundred and three days not the least smell was perceived, whilst even the face retained its natural appearance. The asphalt or resin used by the Egyptians most probably owed its preservative power to the presence of carbolic acid.

SAMUEL.—The chief element of snake poisons is formic acid. By digesting this with chromic acid, readily obtained from bichromate of potash, by the addition of sulphuric acid, the result is the production of carbonic acid and water. Hence dilute chromic acid may be safely employed as an antidote to snake poisons. It has been found that the poison infused by snake bites may be successfully destroyed by applying carbolic acid to the wound. At the same time ten drops of the acid, diluted with brandy and water, are to be administered at intervals until the stupor and drowsiness usually following the bite of a snake are removed. The plan has been extensively adopted in Australia.

CURIOS.—In August, 1868, an ingenious invention, by which the organ may be played by electricity, was publicly exhibited in London. In the ordinary way the player sits within the front of the organ, a position that renders it impossible for him to judge of the results of the sound, still less of the melodious blendings and management of the swells on which so much of the effects of the organ depends. By the electric method the player and keys may be removed any distance from the instrument. The keys are connected with it by means of insulated wires that convey electricity as the player presses each key, and act on electro magnets which open the pipe valve.

S. J.—Your landlord must sue you upon the promissory note and obtain judgment before he can take your goods for the rent represented by that promissory note. For that precise rent the goods of your lodgers cannot be taken, but for any subsequent rent which is due the landlord can avail himself of his summary right of distress against your lodger's goods, your own, and any goods he finds on the premises, provided always that such goods, to whomsoever belonging, are such as the

law considers distrainable. If you have no goods to satisfy the judgment obtained upon the promissory note, you are liable to be imprisoned at the discretion of a judge.

M. A. B., twenty-seven, tall, and industrious, wishes to marry a respectable mechanic about thirty.

T. H., nineteen, fair, and in a good position. Respondent must have good looks and business habits; a tradesman's daughter preferred.

FREDERICO, nineteen, 5ft. 3in., fair, good looking, and in a good position. Respondent must be musical, loving, and between seventeen and eighteen.

GRAY, eighteen, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, good tempered, and musical. Respondent must be dark, good looking, domesticated, and fond of music.

MARGIE B., a cook, twenty, dark eyes and hair, with a little money, would like to marry a young man about twenty-six who is a gasfitter or a blacksmith.

O. R. P., nineteen, tall, dark hair, fair complexion, accomplished, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, gentlemanly, of good family, and industrious.

CLARA C., eighteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, pretty, good tempered, well educated, and loving. Respondent must be tall, dark, affectionate, gentlemanly, and well educated.

JESSIE M., eighteen, medium height, dark chestnut hair, violet eyes, handsome, well educated, loving, and good tempered. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, well educated, and gentlemanly.

E. H., twenty-one, medium height, good looking, fair complexion, blue eyes, dark hair, and good tempered, wishes to marry a mechanic, a mason preferred, about twenty-five.

MAUD, nineteen, rather tall, brown hair, hazel eyes, ladylike, musical, good tempered, loving, and has good expectations. Respondent must be twenty-one, tall, dark, steady, fond of home, and well educated.

ETHEL, sixteen, middle height, fair complexion, light hair, blue eyes, can play the piano, is good tempered, and merry. Respondent must be dark, tall, about twenty, a sailor of good education, loving, and good tempered.

MARGIE, twenty-eight, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, good looking, genteel, affectionate, good tempered, and domesticated. Respondent must be about thirty-four, of medium height, rather dark, steady, well educated, and a tradesman.

LENA, twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes. Respondent must be tall, dark, with moustache, about twenty-eight or thirty, a resident in London, in easy circumstances, well educated, and a gentleman both in person and manners.

MAUD AND ANNA.—"Maud," eighteen, light blue eyes, golden hair, good looking, loving, and fond of music and home. "Anna," seventeen, flaxen hair, dark blue eyes, fair complexion, good looking, and fond of music and home. Both in the enjoyment of an income. Respondents must be dark, good looking, loving, and fond of home.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ROSE GRAY is responded to by—"G. W.," twenty-four, tall, dark, with curly hair; he is a chorister in a church, fond of home and its comforts, and in a good position.

ALFRED by—"Clarence," seventeen, 5ft. 5in., bright brown eyes, and good looking.

GUY by—"Nellie," a blonde, nineteen, ladylike, affectionate, and a tradesman's daughter.

DARCY by—"Millie," a brunette, seventeen, loving, and cheerful.

R. H. A. by—"J. W. P.," twenty-two, 5ft. 7in., fair, blue eyes, good looking, steady, well educated, loving, and in a good position.

DAVID EDYD JENNY by—"Frank W.," twenty-five, 5ft. 5in., blue eyes, light brown curly hair, and in a good position.

LONELY WILL by—"Kate," twenty-four, 5ft. 3in., brown hair, blue eyes, loving, domesticated, and fond of children; and—"Esther," twenty-seven, rather dark, domesticated, fond of home, and loving.

X. Y. Z. by—"A. M. W.," a widow of middle age and without encumbrance;—"L. M. E.," a widow without children, middle-aged, good tempered, affectionate, and fond of home;—"Bessie," a widow, 5ft., fair, blue eyes, ladylike, thinks herself suitable, and is quite alone; and—"A Lonely Widow," who can give a good husband a loving heart and make his home one of peace and happiness.

J. P.'s communication is inadmissible.

E. A. B. must send descriptive personal particulars.

A. B. C.'s response is too indefinite to obtain insertion.

A. R.'s response is deficient in the necessary particulars.

U. V. W. should have sent her address and a better description of her appearance.

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